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TEN ESSAYS ON ZIONISM AND JUDAISM

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TEN ESSAYS

on

ZIONISM AND JUDAISM

BY

ACHAD HA-AM

[Asher Ginzberg]

TRANSLATED FROM THE HEBREW BY

LEON SIMON

Author of *Studies in Jewish Nationalism*

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TRANSLATOR'S INTRODUCTION

The present volume of translations from the Hebrew of Achad Ha-Am¹ differs in character from the volume of *Selected Essays* published in 1912 by the Jewish Publication Society of America. The earlier selection was confined, by the express desire of the publishing Society, to essays dealing with the broader aspects of Judaism and Jewish thought; essays of a more polemical character, in which the author has defined his attitude to the modern Jewish national movement, were designedly omitted. Of the ten further essays included in the present selection, only two belong to the former category, and these have been placed, out of their chronological order, at the end. The other eight essays all deal with one aspect or another of Zionism, and they form a series which will enable the English reader who is interested in the Zionist movement to follow its history under the guidance of one who is at the same time among its staunchest pillars and its most unsparing critics. The first² of the eight—which is also the first essay written by Achad Ha-Am—belongs to the early

¹ Achad Ha-Am (= "one of the people") is the pen-name of Asher Ginzberg, a famous Hebrew thinker and essayist, born in Russia in 1856, who has lived in London since 1908. His biography (up to 1902) is given in the *Jewish Encyclopædia*. For some account of his teaching I may refer to the essay called "One of the People" in my *Studies in Jewish Nationalism* (Longmans, 1920).

² This essay ("The Wrong Way"), when first published, had to be expressed somewhat obscurely so as to pass the Russian Censor. It was altered subsequently, when the first collection of Achad Ha-Am's essays was published in book form, but it still lacks somewhat of the absolute clarity which distinguishes his usual style.

years of the Jewish national movement, when the Zionist Organisation was unborn, and the very name "Zionism" uninvented. The last of the eight—and the most recent of Achad Ha-Am's essays, for the war and ill-health have made him silent of recent years—records his impressions of the practical results achieved by Zionism in Palestine up to 1911.

As the background of these essays is for the most part unfamiliar to English readers, it will not be out of place to give here a brief sketch of the phases through which the Zionist movement has passed, in so far as that is necessary for a proper understanding of the criticisms and allusions in the essays themselves.

The first organised form of Zionism took shape in Russia under the stress of the pogroms of 1880-81. Those pogroms, following a period during which the Russian Government had seemed to be working sincerely towards the emancipation of the Jews, and themselves followed by a whole code of restrictive legislation known as the May Laws, awoke into a blaze the national sentiment which had slumbered but had not died in the Russian Ghetto. They revealed the evils of *galuth*—exile, life outside Palestine—in all their hideousness, and turned men's minds to the active accomplishment of that escape from *galuth* for which during many centuries the Jew had only prayed. *Chibbath Zion* (Love of Zion) became an organised movement, and throughout Russia groups of *Chovevé Zion* (Lovers of Zion) began to work for the settlement of Jews on the land in Palestine. At the head of the movement stood Dr. Leo Pinsker, who in his pamphlet *Auto-Emancipation* had outlined an ambitious scheme for the emigration of Jews *en masse* to some territory (not necessarily

Palestine) where they could be their own masters. His proposal found no response among the emancipated Western Jews, to whom it was addressed; and as its realisation was obviously beyond the power of the oppressed and persecuted Russian Jews, its author turned to *Chibbath Zion* as the only means open to him of working for a national regeneration of Jewry. Events soon showed that *Chibbath Zion* was as yet unable to achieve so large an aim. The difficulties in the way of settling Jews on the land in Palestine were enormous, and the resources of the *Chovevé Zion* were painfully limited. The national sentiment was not sufficiently alive in the Jewish masses to induce large numbers of them to brave the hardships and privations of life in Palestine for the sake of a national ideal. Any Jew whose primary object was to escape from pogroms and May Laws and to better his individual position would naturally prefer some country, like the United States, where economic life was already developed. The *Chovevé Zion* attempted, rather unwisely, to make Palestine attractive to the less idealistically minded by exaggerating the possibilities of individual self-advancement which it held out. The natural result was disappointment and disillusion; and the Palestinian agricultural settlements (or colonies, as they are generally called) would have faded away altogether but for the generous assistance of Baron Edmond de Rothschild, of Paris. Thanks to him the first colonies pulled through, and after many vicissitudes were set on the road to independence. But the whole colonisation movement remained small and poor, and any hopes which might have been entertained of its bringing about even the beginning of a solution of the material problem of *galuth* were dissipated at an early

date. Meanwhile, however, the *Chovevé Zion* contributed to a national work of the first importance by helping to lay the foundations of a revival of the Hebrew language, especially in Palestine—a development which, while it had nothing to do with the solution of any material problem, had very much to do with the stimulation of that national sentiment which is the only possible basis of a national as distinct from a purely philanthropic or economic movement.

In 1895, when the colonisation work was at a low ebb, the Jewish world was startled by the appearance of *Der Judenstaat*, a pamphlet in which a brilliant Viennese journalist and playwright, Dr. Theodor Herzl, advocated, as a solution of the Jewish problem, the establishment of an autonomous Jewish State in some suitable territory (not necessarily Palestine). Herzl's scheme was (unconsciously) more or less a reproduction of that of Pinsker; but it met with a different fate, largely, no doubt, thanks to the silent growth of the national sentiment which had been brought about during the intervening years by the awakening—albeit to little purpose from a purely practical point of view—of Jewish interest in Palestine. While the Western Jews were for the most part as deaf to Herzl's call as they had been to Pinsker's, many of the *Chovevé Zion* found in his pamphlet a new inspiration, and their pressure induced him to take in hand himself the practical realisation of a scheme which he had meant to leave others to carry out. The result was the Zionist Organisation, which was founded at the first Zionist Congress at Basle in 1897. This organisation, though the great body of its supporters was drawn from the ranks of the *Chovevé Zion*, reflected the outlook and ideas of Herzl and his

handful of friends and supporters from the West. There was to be no more waste of time and effort on "petty colonisation." Instead, there was to be a political organisation of Jewry, with a large National Fund, which would first of all buy Palestine from the Turk under a Charter guaranteed by the European Powers, and would then proceed to settle in Palestine all those Jews who could not be happy where they were. This beautiful dream roused the Jewish masses for a time to a kind of Messianic fervour; it was so much more alluring than the hard realities which the *Chovevé Zion* had had to face. But after a few years the inevitable awakening came. Realities remained realities, and the Charter remained a distant vision. Herzl passed away untimely in 1904, and with him and his wonderful personality passed the only force which could make the dream-world appear for a time real. He had, indeed, obtained from the British Government an offer of a territory in East Africa (commonly, though incorrectly, located in Uganda) for a quasi-autonomous settlement of Jews; but this triumph of the Zionist Organisation only served to bring out the essential difference, hitherto more or less successfully kept in the background, between the head of the Organisation and its body. The *Chovevé Zion*, however they may have erred in attempting to further the colonisation of Palestine by appeals to individual self-interest, had at any rate remained sufficiently nationalist to feel that a national Jewish settlement could by no possibility have any other home than Palestine. They had seen to it that the Zionist Organisation put Palestine and no other country into its programme. Now, when they found their trusted and beloved leader attempting to divert them to East

Africa—though he averred solemnly that East Africa was only intended as a temporary refuge, a *Nachtsyl*, and Palestine remained the real goal—they felt that they had been betrayed. Herzl's enormous influence averted, at the Congress of 1903, a direct refusal of the British Government's offer: a Commission was appointed to study the proposed territory. But when the next Congress met, in 1905, Herzl was no more, and the opponents of East Africa—the *Zioné Zion*, "Zion-Zionists," as they were called—carried the day. There was of course a violent reaction: the masses swung away from Zionism, now that it no longer held out to them the hope of a refuge from persecution and poverty, and some of the minority party founded a new body, the Jewish Territorial Organisation, to search the globe for a home of refuge. This was all to the good, for the Zionist Organisation was purged of Messianism and was able to face realities again. The framework, and to a large extent the phraseology, created by Herzl were retained, but essentially the Zionist Organisation became perforce an instrument for the realisation of the national ideal along the two lines on which alone real advance is possible—the lines of Palestinian development and national education. It was only during the war, which brought on the one hand the Balfour Declaration, with its promise of a National Home for the Jewish people in Palestine, and on the other hand untold suffering and loss to the Jewish masses in Eastern Europe, that Messianic hopes were again aroused—again to be followed by the inevitable disillusionment and reaction.

On the position created by the recent developments of Zionism Achad Ha-Am has commented in a brief

introduction, written in June, 1920, for a new edition of his collected essays in Hebrew. As the question of the scope of the Balfour Declaration is still much debated, and has a special interest for English readers, I reproduce here the greater part of that Introduction.

“When,” he writes, “I returned from Palestine in 1912, and my *Summa Summarum* aroused violent anger in various quarters, I wrote an explanatory note by way of supplement to that essay; and I should like to remind my readers on this occasion of some of the things that I said then, because they seem to me relevant at the present time. ‘There must be,’ I wrote, ‘some natural connection of cause and effect between an object and the means by which its attainment is sought: we must be able to show how this object can be attained by these means. So long as that connection does not exist, so long as we cannot attempt to justify our choice of means except by such vague phrases as “Perhaps . . . you never can tell . . . times change . . .”—we may speak of cherished hopes and an ideal for the distant future, but we cannot speak of a *practical* object which can serve as a basis for a systematic plan of work. For every systematic plan of work must necessarily be based on a clear conception (whether intellectual or imaginative) of the chain of cause and effect which connects the various activities one with another, and all of them together with the object. . . . No doubt, we cannot foretell the future; no doubt it is possible that unforeseen things may happen and may change the face of reality. But a possibility of that kind cannot be made the basis of a systematic plan of work, and we are dealing no longer with an objective of immediate activity, but with a vision of the future.’

“ About two years after these words were written and published the world-war began, and led to those results which we know: ‘unforeseen things happened and changed the face of reality.’ Our own life, too, was caught in the maelstrom of world-happenings; and the face of our own reality, too, was changed as a consequence. Much might be said, and has already been said, about the character of these changes, about their good and their bad side, about their significance both for the Diaspora and for Palestine. I cannot now deal with this subject fully, and I wish for my part only to say a word or two on one of the principal features of the changed situation—I mean the widening of the horizon of our work in Palestine through the famous Declaration of the British Government, which has recently been confirmed by the Supreme Council, and thus has ceased to be merely the promise of a single Government and has become an international obligation. This Declaration has provided a new ‘basis for a systematic plan of work,’ and has set up ‘an objective of immediate activity’—activity on a large scale, such as has been hitherto only a theme for the anticipations of orators and essayists, with no real basis in the present. But at the same time the Declaration has winged anew the imagination of those who were already accustomed to build castles in the air, without regard to the realities of this earthly life. That is, I fancy, one of the reasons why there is still a demand for this book, though much of its contents does not fit the realities of to-day. It is not so much the contents that matter as the point of view from which I have tried to deal with the various questions as they arose. I have tried to judge not on the basis of that ‘you-never-can-tell’

attitude which shrouds itself in the mists of the future, but on the basis of present realities, or of impending realities which can be prognosticated from existing conditions. Even to-day this point of view needs reiteration. For once it has happened, as by a miracle, that what was wildly improbable a short time ago has become to a certain extent actual: and this 'miracle' has led those who were always waiting for miracles to claim a victory, and to insist on maintaining their attitude for the future also, and on laying down as the one principle of policy this perverted axiom—that if such a thing has happened once in exceptional circumstances, its like may happen again, and we can therefore construct our world as we please, regardless of present realities, and relying on a repetition of the miracle when we need it. There is a Jewish proverb which says: 'A mistake which succeeds is none the less a mistake.' So a plan of work which turns its back on realities, and relies on the possibility that something out of the ordinary may turn up and change realities to its advantage, is a mistaken plan, even if it succeeds for once in a way. And if it goes on banking on the element of chance, which does in fact interfere occasionally with the normal course of events, and continues to act accordingly, it will end in disaster, despite its initial success.

"All the details of the diplomatic conversations in London which led to the Declaration have not yet been made public; but the time has come to reveal one 'secret,' because knowledge of it will make it easier to understand the true meaning of the Declaration.

"'To facilitate the establishment in Palestine of a National Home for the Jewish people'—that is the text of the promise given to us by the British Government.

But that is not the text suggested to the Government by the Zionist spokesmen. They wished it to read : 'the reconstitution of Palestine as the National Home of the Jewish people' ; but when the happy day arrived on which the Declaration was signed and sealed by the Government, it was found to contain the first formula and not the second. That is to say, the allusion to the fact that we are about to *rebuild* our *old* national home was dropped, and at the same time the words 'constitution of Palestine as the national home' were replaced by 'establishment of a national home in Palestine.' There were some who understood at once that this had some significance ; but others thought that the difference was merely one of form. Hence they sometimes attempted on subsequent occasions, when the negotiations with the Government afforded an opportunity, to formulate the promise in their own wording, as though it had not been changed. But every time they found in the Government's reply a repetition of the actual text of the Declaration—which proves that it is not a case where the same thing may be put equally well in either of two ways, but that the promise is really defined in this particular form of words, and goes no further.

“ It can scarcely be necessary to explain at length the difference between the two versions. Had the British Government accepted the version suggested to it—that Palestine should be reconstituted as the national home of the Jewish people—its promise might have been interpreted as meaning that Palestine, inhabited as it now is, was restored to the Jewish people on the ground of its historic right ; that the Jewish people was to rebuild its waste places and was destined to rule over it and to manage all its affairs in its own way, without

regard to the consent or non-consent of its present inhabitants. For this rebuilding (it might have been understood) is only a renewal of the ancient right of the Jews, which over-rides the right of the present inhabitants, who have wrongly established their national home on a land not their own. But the British Government, as it stated expressly in the Declaration itself, was not willing to promise anything which would harm the present inhabitants of Palestine, and therefore it changed the Zionist formula, and gave it a more restricted form. The Government thinks, it would seem, that when a people has only the moral force of its claim to build its national home in a land at present inhabited by others, and has not behind it a powerful army or fleet to prove the justice of its claim, that people can have only what its right allows it in truth and justice, and not what conquering peoples take for themselves by armed force, under the cover of various 'rights' invented for the occasion. Now the historic right of a people in relation to a country inhabited by others can mean only the right to settle once more in its ancestral land, to work the land and to develop its resources without hindrance. And if the inhabitants complain that strangers have come to exploit the land and its population, the historic right has a complete answer to them: these newcomers are not strangers, but the descendants of the old masters of the country, and as soon as they settle in it again, they are as good as natives. And not only the settlers as individuals, but the collective body as a people, when it has once more put into this country a part of its national wealth—men, capital, cultural institutions and so forth—has again in the country its national home, and has the right to

extend and to complete its home up to the limit of its capacity. But this historic right does not over-ride the right of the other inhabitants, which is a tangible right based on generation after generation of life and work in the country. The country is at present their national home too, and they too have the right to develop their national potentialities so far as they are able. This position, then, makes Palestine common ground for different peoples, each of which tries to establish its national home there; and in this position it is impossible for the national home of either of them to be complete and to embrace all that is involved in the conception of a 'national home.' If you build your house not on untenanted ground, but in a place where there are other inhabited houses, you are sole master only as far as your front gate. Within you may arrange your effects as you please, but beyond the gate all the inhabitants are partners, and the general administration must be ordered in conformity with the good of all of them. Similarly, national homes of different peoples in the same country can demand only national freedom for each one in its internal affairs, and the affairs of the country which are common to all of them are administered by all the 'householders' jointly if the relations between them and their degree of development qualify them for the task, or, if that condition is not yet fulfilled, by a guardian from outside, who takes care that the rights of none shall be infringed.

“When, then, the British Government promised to facilitate the establishment *in Palestine of a national home* for the Jewish people—and not, as was suggested to it, the reconstitution of Palestine as the national home of the Jewish people—that promise meant two

things. It meant in the first place recognition of the historic right of the Jewish people to build its national home in Palestine, with a promise of assistance from the British Government; and it meant in the second place a negation of the power of that right to over-ride the right of the present inhabitants and to make the Jewish people sole ruler in the country. The national home of the Jewish people must be built out of the free material which can still be found in the country itself, and out of that which the Jews will bring in from outside or will create by their work, without overthrowing the national home of the other inhabitants. And as the two homes are contiguous, and friction and conflicts of interest are inevitable, especially in the early period of the building of the Jewish national home, of which not even the foundations have yet been properly laid, the promise necessarily demands, though it is not expressly so stated, that a guardian shall be appointed over the two homes—that is, over the whole country—to see to it that the owner of the historic right, while he does not injure the inhabitants in their internal affairs, shall not on his side have obstacles put in his way by his neighbour, who at present is stronger than he. And in course of time, when the new national home is fully built, and its tenant is able to rely, no less than his neighbour, on the right which belongs to a large population living and working in the country, it will be possible to raise the question whether the time has not come to hand over the control of the country to the 'householders' themselves, so that they may together administer their joint affairs, fairly and justly, in accordance with the needs of each of them and the value of his work for the revival and development of the country.

“ This and no more, it seems to me, is what we can find in the Balfour Declaration ; and this and no more is what our leaders and writers ought to have told the people, so that it should not imagine more than what is actually there, and afterwards relapse into despair and absolute scepticism.

“ But we all know how the Declaration was interpreted at the time of its publication, and how much exaggeration many of our workers and writers have tried to introduce into it from that day to this. The Jewish people listened, and believed that the end of the *galuth* had indeed come, and that in a short time Palestine would be a ‘ Jewish State.’ The Arab people too, which we have always ignored from the very beginning of the colonisation movement, listened, and believed that the Jews were coming to expropriate its land and to do with it what they liked. All this inevitably led to friction and bitterness on both sides, and contributed much to the state of things which was revealed in all its ugliness in the events at Jerusalem last April.¹ Those events, in conjunction with others which preceded them, might have taught us how long is the way from a written promise to its practical realisation, and how many are the obstacles, not easily to be removed, which beset our path. But apparently we learned nothing ; and only a short time after the events at Jerusalem, when the British promise was confirmed at San Remo, we began once more to blow the Messianic trumpet, to announce the ‘ redemption,’ and so forth.

¹ [The anti-Jewish riots of April, 1920, in which many lives were lost. In a footnote at this point the author recalls that as far back as 1891 he drew attention to the Arab question, and pointed out the folly of regarding the Arabs as “ wild men of the desert,” who could not see what was going on around them.]

The confirmation of the promise, as I said above, raised it to the level of an international obligation, and from that point of view it is undoubtedly of great value. But essentially it added nothing, and the text of the earlier promise remains absolutely unaltered. What the real meaning of that text is, we have seen above; but its brevity and vagueness allow those who so wish—as experience in Palestine has shown—to restrict its meaning much more—indeed, almost to nothing. Everything, therefore, depends on the good will of the ‘guardian,’ on whom was placed at San Remo the duty of giving the promise practical effect. Had we paid attention to realities, we should have restrained our feelings, and have waited a little to see how the written word would be interpreted in practice.

“ I have dwelt perhaps at undue length on this point, because it is the fundamental one. But in truth we are now confronted with other questions, *internal* questions, which demand a solution without delay; and the solutions which we hear from time to time are as far from realities as are the poles asunder. It will not be long, however, before these visionary proposals, which are so attractive, have to make way for actual *work*, and we have to show *in practice* how far we have the material and moral strength to establish the national home which we have been given permission to establish in Palestine.

“ And at this great and difficult moment I appear before my readers—perhaps for the last time—on the threshold of this book, and repeat once more my old warning, on which most of the essays in this book are but a commentary :

“ Do not press on too quickly to the goal, so long as

the actual conditions without which it cannot be reached have not been created ; and do not disparage the work which is possible at any given time, having regard to actual conditions, even if it will not bring the Messiah to-day or to-morrow."

It is because Achad Ha-Am has consistently driven home the lesson reiterated in these last words, and because that lesson is so strikingly apt at the present time, that one feels justified to-day in producing a translation of some of his essays which, as regards their actual subject-matter, are somewhat out of date. The point of view from which he approaches Zionist questions—that of an idealism guided but not subdued by a sternly objective apprehension of realities—is not out of date, and never will be until either human beings or external realities change very much. And that point of view is capable of a wider application than is expressly given to it by the Lover of Zion, concerned primarily with the problems and the destiny of his own people : for it is true of any other ideal movement no less than of Zionism that it is endangered not alone by those who oppose it, but also by those who adhere to it only because they expect it to work miracles.

The translations in this volume, like those in its predecessor, have had the advantage of revision by Achad Ha-Am. The few foot-notes which the translator has added are enclosed in square brackets.

I am much indebted to Mr. Fisher Unwin and to Messrs. Paul Goodman and Arthur D. Lewis for permission to include in this volume the translation of "A

Spiritual Centre," which first appeared in *Zionism : Problems and Views*, and to the Union of Jewish Literary Societies for permission to reprint that part of "The Time has Come" which appeared in the *Jewish Literary Annual* for 1907. My best thanks are due to the Editors of the *Jewish Review*, Messrs. Norman Bentwich and Joseph Hockman, who have kindly allowed me to include "Judaism and the Gospels" and "Summa Summarum" from the *Jewish Review*. I have also to thank the *Jüdischer Verlag*, which now owns the copyright of the Hebrew original, for consenting to the publication of this volume of translations.

LEON SIMON.

THE WRONG WAY

(1889)

I

For many centuries the Jewish people, sunk in poverty and degradation, has been sustained by faith and hope in the divine mercy. The present generation has seen the birth of a new and far-reaching idea, which promises to bring down our faith and hope from heaven, and transform both into living and active forces, making our land the goal of hope, and our people the anchor of faith.

Historic ideas of this kind spring forth suddenly, as though of their own accord, when the time is ripe. They at once establish their sway over the minds which respond to them, and from these they spread abroad and make their way through the world—as a spark first sets fire to the most inflammable material, and then spreads to the framework of the building. It was in this way that our idea came to birth, without our being able to say who discovered it, and won adherents among those who halted half-way: among those, that is, whose faith had weakened, and who had no longer the patience to wait for miracles, but who, on the other hand, were still attached to their people by bonds which had not lost their strength, and had not yet abandoned belief in its right to exist as a single people. These first “nationalists” raised the banner of the new idea, and went out to fight

its battle full of confidence. The sincerity of their own conviction gradually awoke conviction in others, and daily fresh recruits joined them from Left and Right : so that one might have expected them in a short time to be numbered by tens of thousands.

But meanwhile the movement underwent a fundamental change. The idea took practical shape in the work of Palestinian colonisation. This unlooked-for development surprised friends and foes alike. The friends of the idea raised a shout of victory, and cried in exultation : Is not this a thing unheard-of, that an idea so young has strength to force its way into the world of action ? Does not this prove clearly that we were not mere dreamers ? The foes of the movement, on their side, who had hitherto despised it and mocked it, as an idle fancy of dreamers and visionaries, now began grudgingly to admit that after all it showed signs of life and was worthy of attention.

From that time dates a new period in the history of the idea ; and if we glance at the whole course of its development from that time to the present, we shall find once again matter for surprise. Whereas previously the idea grew ever stronger and stronger and spread more and more widely among all sections of the people, while its sponsors looked to the future with exultation and high hopes, now, after its victory, it has ceased to win new adherents, and even its old adherents seem to lose their energy, and ask for nothing more than the well-being of the few poor colonies¹ already in existence, which are what remains of all their pleasant visions of an earlier day. But even this modest demand remains unfulfilled ; the land is full of intrigues and quarrels and pettiness—

¹ [*i.e.*, Jewish agricultural settlements in Palestine.]

all for the sake and for the glory of the great idea—which give them no peace and endless worry ; and who knows what will be the end of it all ?

If, as a philosopher has said, it is melancholy to witness the death from old age of a religion which brought comfort to men in the past, how much more sad is it when an idea full of youthful vigour—the hope of the passing generation and the salvation of that which is coming—stumbles and falls at the outset of its career ! Add to this that the idea in question is one which we see exercising so profound an influence over many peoples, and surely we are bound to ask ourselves the old question : Why are we so different from any other race or nation ? Or are those of our people really right, who say that we have ceased to be a nation and are held together only by the bond of religion ? But, after all, those who take that view can speak only for themselves. It is true that between them and us there is no longer any bond except that of a common religion and the hatred which our enemies have for us ; but we ourselves, who feel our Jewish nationality in our own hearts, very properly deride anybody who tries to argue out of existence something of which we have an intuitive conviction. If this is so, why has not the idea of the national rebirth succeeded in taking root even among ourselves and in making that progress for which we hoped ?

Writers in the press give us two answers to this question. Some blame the *Chalukah*¹ with its Rabbis

¹ [*Chalukah*—lit. “division”—is the Hebrew name for the stream of charity which flows—or flowed before the war—into Palestine from all quarters of the Jewish dispersion. Intended primarily for the support of scholars, it has in practice done much to pauperise the Jewish population in the cities of Palestine, and has created a problem which it may take a generation or more of economic progress to solve.]

and scribes, others "the Baron"¹ with his agents and administrators in Palestine. All alike try to fasten the blame on certain men, as though but for them the Jewish problem would have been solved for all time; and the only point at issue is whether it is A. and B. or X. and Y. who stand in the way of that consummation. But such answers are not at all satisfying. They simply raise a further question: How is it that certain individuals, be they who they may, are in a position to obstruct the progress of the whole nation? Must it not be a sorry "national movement" which depends for its success on the generosity of a philanthropist and the kindness of his agents, and cannot withstand the miserable *Chalukah*, which is itself fighting for its existence with what strength it has left?

We must look, then, for the cause of all the evil not in isolated facts, in what this man or the other does, but much deeper. If we do that we shall find, I think, the true cause to lie in the "victory" which the idea has achieved prematurely through the fault of its champions. In their eagerness to obtain great results before the time was ripe, they have deserted the long road of natural development, and by artificial means have forced into the arena of practical life an idea which was still young and tender, neither fully ripened nor sufficiently developed; and thanks to this excessive haste their strength has failed them, and their labour has been in vain.

This judgment will certainly not be widely acceptable, and I will therefore endeavour in what follows to explain it so far as I am able, and so far as the nature of the subject permits.

¹ [Baron Edmond de Rothschild.]

Every belief or opinion which leads to action must necessarily be founded on the following three judgments : First, that the attainment of a certain object is felt by us to be needed ; secondly, that certain actions are the means to the attainment of that object ; and thirdly, that those actions are not beyond our power, and the effort which they require is not so great as to outweigh the value of the object in our estimation. The first of these judgments is based on feeling, and needs no proof ; the second and third are based on knowledge of facts and phenomena outside ourselves, and therefore need the assent of reason.

When, therefore, a new idea summons us to a new course of action, it may be simply discovering new methods of attaining an object which we valued before, and may at the same time be able to demonstrate by conclusive proofs, whether theoretical or practical, that these methods really lead to the attainment of the object, and are commensurate with its value and with our resources. A new discovery of this sort belongs entirely to the sphere of reason, and therefore its sponsors need put their case only before people of intelligence and good judgment. If such men pronounce the new idea right, and proceed to act as it bids, its victory among the masses is assured : for gradually the masses will follow in the right course. But it will be different if one of these conditions is lacking—if, that is, the object which the new idea sets before us is one that we do not already value, or one not valued proportionately to the difficulty of its attainment ; or again if it cannot compel reason, by convincing arguments, to admit the correctness of its judgment as regards the connection between the means and the object, and as

regards the resources and the effort necessary for the attainment of the object. In either of these cases the new idea must rely for its success not on reason, but on sentiment. For the growth of a feeling of affection and desire for the object will carry with it not only a strengthening of the determination to strive after its attainment, no matter how great the effort required, but also an increasing intellectual belief in the possibility of its attainment, in spite of the absence of conclusive evidence that it is attainable. Hence those who originate an idea of this kind have not, at the outset of their activity, any concern with the intellectuals, the men of dry logic and cold calculation : it is not in that quarter that they will find support. They must turn only to those whose sensibilities are quick, and who are governed by their feelings ; they alone will listen. And for that reason the originators of the idea must themselves be above all things men of keen sensibility, temperamentally capable of concentrating their whole spiritual life on a single point, on one idea and one desire, of devoting their whole life to it and expending in its service their last ounce of strength. By doing their work competently and with absolute devotion they will show that they have themselves boundless faith in the truth of their idea, and infinite love for its service ; and that will be the only sure means of awakening faith and love in others. In that way, and not by mere talk, will they gain wide support for their idea. And if they appeal in this way to sentiment, then there is a chance for the idea (provided that it does in some way correspond to a current need) to spread gradually and to win many adherents who will be devoted to it heart and soul. It is true that such adherents, being strong mainly on the

side of feeling, are not generally fitted, for all their good will, to carry out a difficult undertaking, which needs strength, discernment, and experience; but that matters not at all. For in course of time, as the idea strikes root more and more firmly in the heart of the people, and makes its way into every house and every family, it will at last capture the great men, the leaders and the thinkers. They, too, will begin, whether they like it or no, to feel the workings of the new force which envelops them on every side. Their opposition will grow feebler and feebler, until at last they will succumb and take their place in the van. Then the idea will become a force to be reckoned with in practical affairs, and its originators, setting out on the task of its realisation, with the confidence born of strength, and with the necessary equipment of knowledge and skill, may achieve brilliant results, and have the laugh of the intellectuals and the sceptics who used to scoff at them as dreamers.

The history of ideas and beliefs afford actual examples of all that has been said above. But it is time to return to our immediate subject.

The idea which we are here discussing is not new in the sense of setting up a new object of endeavour; but the methods which it suggests for the attainment of its object demand a great expenditure of effort, and it cannot prove the adequacy of its methods so conclusively as to compel reason to assent to the truth of its judgments. What it needs, therefore, is to make of the devotion and the desire which are felt for its ideal an instrument for the strengthening of faith and the sharpening of resolution. Now the devotion of the individual to the well-being of the community, which is

the ideal here in question, is a sentiment to which we Jews are no strangers. But if we would estimate aright its capacity to produce the faith and the resolution that are needed for the realisation of our idea, we must first of all study the vicissitudes through which it has passed, and examine its present condition.

All the laws and ordinances, all the blessings and curses of the Law of Moses have but one unvarying object: the well-being of the nation as a whole in the land of its inheritance. The happiness of the individual is not regarded. The individual Israelite is treated as standing to the people of Israel in the relation of a single limb to the whole body: the actions of the individual have their reward in the good of the community. One long chain unites all the generations, from Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob to the end of time; the covenant which God made with the Patriarchs he keeps with their descendants, and if the fathers eat sour grapes, the teeth of the children will be set on edge. For the people is one people throughout all its generations, and the individuals who come and go in each generation are but as those minute parts of the living body which change every day, without affecting in any degree the character of that organic unity which is the whole body.

It is difficult to say definitely whether at any period our people as a whole really entertained the sentiment of national loyalty in this high degree, or whether it was only a moral ideal cherished by the most important section of the people. But at any rate it is clear that after the destruction of the first Temple, when the nation's star had almost set, and its well-being was so nearly shattered that even its best sons despaired, and when the elders of Israel sat before Ezekiel and said: "We will be as

the heathen, as the families of the countries," and "Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost"—it is clear that at that time our people began to be more concerned about the fate of the righteous individual who perishes despite his righteousness. From that time date the familiar speculations about the relation between goodness and happiness which we find in Ezekiel, in Ecclesiastes, and in many of the Psalms (and in Job some would add, holding that book also to have been written in this period); and many men, not satisfied by any of the solutions which were propounded, came to the conclusion that "it is vain to serve God," and that "to serve the Master without expectation of reward" is a fruitless proceeding. It would seem that then, and not till then, when the well-being of the community could no longer inspire enthusiasm and idealism, did our people suddenly remember the individual, remember that besides the life of the body corporate the individual has a life peculiarly his own, and that in this life of his own he wants pleasure and happiness, and demands a personal reward for his personal righteousness.

The effect of this discovery on the Jewish thought of that epoch is found in such pronouncements as this: "The present life is like an entrance-hall to the future life." The happiness which the individual desires will become his when he enters the banqueting-hall, if only he qualifies for it by his conduct in the ante-room. The national ideal having ceased to satisfy, the religious ordinances are endowed instead with a meaning and a purpose for the individual, as the spirit of the age demands, and are put outside the domain of the national sentiment. Despite this change, the national sentiment continued for a long time to live on and to play its part

in the *political* life of the people : witness the whole history of the long period which ended with the wars of Titus and Hadrian. But since on the political side there was a continuous decline, the religious life grew correspondingly stronger, and concurrently the individualist element in the individual members of the nation prevailed more and more over the nationalist element, and drove it ultimately from its last stronghold—the hope for a future redemption. That hope, the heartfelt yearning of a nation seeking in a distant future what the present could not give, ceased in time to satisfy people in its original form, which looked forward to a Messianic Age “differing from the life of to-day in nothing except the emancipation of Israel from servitude.” For living men and women no longer found any comfort for themselves in the abundance of good which was to come to their nation in the latter end of days, when they would be dead and gone. Each individual demanded his own private and personal share of the expected general happiness. And religion went so far as to satisfy even this demand, by laying less emphasis on the redemption than on the resurrection of the dead.

Thus the national ideal was completely changed. No longer is patriotism a pure, unselfish devotion ; no longer is the common good the highest of all aims, overriding the personal aims of each individual. On the contrary : henceforward the *summum bonum* is for each individual his personal well-being, in time or in eternity, and the individual cares about the common good only in so far as he himself participates in it. To realise how complete the change of attitude became in course of time, we need only recall the surprise expressed

by the Tannaim¹ because the Pentateuch speaks of "the land which the Lord swore to your ancestors to give to them." In fact, the land was given not to them, but only to their descendants, and so the Tannaim find in this passage an allusion to the resurrection of the dead (*Sifré*).¹ This shows that in their time that deep-rooted consciousness of the union of all ages in the body corporate of the people, which pervades the whole of the Pentateuch, had become so weak that they could not understand the words "to them" except as referring to the actual individuals to whom they were addressed.

Subsequent events—the terrible oppressions and frequent migrations, which intensified immeasurably the personal anxiety of every Jew for his own safety and that of his family—contributed still further to the enfeebling of the already weakened national sentiment, and to the concentration of interest primarily in the life of the family, secondarily in that of the congregation (in which the individual finds satisfaction for his needs). The national life of the people as a whole practically ceased to matter to the individual. Even those Jews who are still capable of feeling occasionally an impulse to work for the nation cannot as a rule so far transcend their individualism as to subordinate their own love of self and their own ambition, or their immediate family or communal interests, to the requirements of the nation. The demon of egoism—individual or congregational—haunts us in all that we do for our people, and suppresses

¹ [The Jewish teachers of the period (roughly) from 200 B.C. to 200 C.E. They were responsible for the Mishnah—the first Code of Jewish Law after the Pentateuch—and for the earliest commentaries on the Bible or parts of it, one of which is called *Sifré*.]

the rare manifestations of national feeling, being the stronger of the two.

This, then, was the state of feeling to which we had to appeal, by means of which we had to create the invincible faith and the indomitable will that are needed for a great, constructive national effort.

What ought we to have done?

It follows from what has been said above that we ought to have made it our first object to bring about a *revival*—to inspire men with a deeper attachment to the national life, and a more ardent desire for the national well-being. By these means we should have aroused the necessary determination, and we should have obtained devoted adherents. No doubt such work is very difficult and takes a long time, not one year or one decade; and, I repeat, it is not to be accomplished by speeches alone, but demands the employment of all means by which men's hearts can be won. Hence it is probable—in fact almost certain—that if we had chosen this method we should not yet have had time to produce concrete results in Palestine itself: lacking the resources necessary to do things well, we should have been too prudent to do things badly. But, on the other side, we should have made strenuous endeavours to train up Jews who would work for their people. We should have striven gradually to extend the empire of our ideal in Jewry, till at last it could find genuine, whole-hearted devotees, with all the qualities needed to enable them to work for its practical realisation.

But such was not the policy of the first champions of our ideal. As Jews, they had a spice of individualism in their nationalism, and were not capable of planting a tree so that others might eat its fruit after they them-

selves were dead and gone. Not satisfied with working among the people to train up those who would ultimately work in the land, they wanted to see with their own eyes the actual work in the land and its results. When, therefore, they found that their first rallying-cry, in which they based their appeal on the general good, did not at once rouse the national determination to take up Palestinian work, they summoned to their aid—like our teachers of old—the individualistic motive, and rested their appeal on economic want, which is always sure of sympathy. To this end they began to publish favourable reports, and to make optimistic calculations, which plainly showed that so many dunams¹ of land, so many head of cattle and so much equipment, costing so-and-so much, were sufficient in Palestine to keep a whole family in comfort and affluence: so that anybody who wanted to do well and had the necessary capital should betake him to the goodly land, where he and his family would prosper, while the nation too would benefit. An appeal on these lines did really induce some people to go to Palestine in order to win comfort and affluence; whereat the promoters of the idea were mightily pleased, and did not examine very closely what kind of people the emigrants to Palestine were, and why they went. But these people, most of whom were by no means prepared to submit cheerfully to discomfort for the sake of a national ideal, found when they reached Palestine that they had been taken in by imaginative reports and estimates; and they set up—and are still keeping up—a loud and bitter outcry, seeking to gain their individual ends by all means in their power, and regardless of any distinction between what is legitimate and what is not,

¹ [A Turkish measure=about $\frac{1}{4}$ acre.]

or of the fair name of the ideal which they dishonour. The details of the story are public property.

What wonder, then, that so great an ideal, presented in so unworthy a form, can no longer gain adherents; that a national building founded on the expectation of profit and self-interest falls to ruins when it becomes generally known that the expectation has not been realised, and self-interest bids men keep away?

This, then, is the wrong way. Certainly, seeing that these ruins are already there, we are not at liberty to neglect the task of mending and improving so far as we can. But at the same time we must remember that it is not on these that we must base our hope of ultimate success. The heart of the people—that is the foundation on which the land will be regenerated. And the people is broken into fragments.

So let us return to the road on which we started when our idea first arose. Instead of adding yet more ruins, let us endeavour to give the idea itself strong roots and to strengthen and deepen its hold on the Jewish people, not by force, but by the spirit. Then we shall in time have the possibility of doing actual work.

“I shall see it, but not now: I shall behold it, but not nigh.”

II

“Let us not theorise too much, or slacken our efforts. Let us avoid impatience and undue haste. Let us increase our devotion to our people and our love for our ancestral land, and the God of Zion will help us.”

These are the concluding words of the long criticism

of my first essay which appeared in *ha-Meliz*.¹ It might be inferred that my advice to the *Chovevé Zion* was that they should confine themselves to theory, give up practical work, proceed with undue haste, and refrain from increasing devotion to our people and love for our ancestral land. But any attentive reader of my article will not need to be told that as regards the two last points I said the exact opposite: that we should not, through undue haste, attempt to achieve by the appeal to self-interest things which are not yet ripe for achievement by force of the ideal itself, because so long as *Chibbath Zion* is not a living and burning passion in the heart of the people we lack the only basis on which the land could be regenerated, and for that reason we must strive with all our might to increase our devotion to our people and our love for our ancestral land. But as regards theorising and neglecting action, I may really have left my meaning uncertain through excessive brevity. Though I said explicitly that propaganda could be made only by work competently done, and not by speeches alone, it is possible that I ought to have added—what is really self-evident from the context—that so long as the time is not ripe for the actual carrying out of our idea, the object of everything that we do on a small scale ought to be simply to win adherents to our cause; that by that test and that alone we ought to distinguish between what is well and what is ill done both in Palestine and outside it; that therefore quality and not quantity must be our concern, and we must not confine our efforts to the improvement of the colonies, but must use all the many and various ways of appealing to the people.

¹ [The Hebrew paper in which this and the foregoing essay originally appeared.]

It is therefore futile for my critic to labour to prove that the *Chovevé Zion* had no right "to defer action until they had created a new state of mind in the Jewish masses and awakened their national consciousness." "Idea and action," he says, "are not separated in our minds; it requires deeds to convince us. How then could the idea of resettlement gain acceptance with the masses if it were not accompanied by action?" All this does not touch my position, because I did not demand deferment of action. On the contrary, I demanded that everything possible should be done to awaken the love of Palestine, and from that it follows that when the champions of the idea themselves cultivate the Holy Land with the sweat of their brows and their hearts' blood, *as an example*, they are doing the very best propaganda work. But the settlement as it is to-day—can it be regarded as propaganda work of this kind? My critic himself says that "the champions of the idea did not do the work with their own hands," but "talked in four languages;" and what they said was calculated only to incite those who were out for material advancement to go to Palestine and do the work. Such men did in fact go to Palestine, and we know what they did and what happened to them and what the settlement has become. No wonder, then, that the idea has gone on losing its influence on the minds of the people, and that the heart of the Jew does not glow at the vision of Jewish farmers hoeing and ploughing the land of our fathers, as in the days of David and Solomon. Neither the deeds nor the doers are such as to inspire enthusiasm in a people whose heart is chilled by age and trouble.

But my critic joins issue with me in principle as well. He maintains that by no possible means can we succeed

in arousing a strong national sentiment among our people, because ever since we became a nation "the sentiment of nationality has been foreign to the spirit of our people, and the individual Jew seeks rather his own good and his private advantage;" and it is vain for us to fight against the spirit and natural character of the people, "for nothing avails against national character." Hence the *Chovevé Zion* chose the line of self-interest, not because they preferred it, but because no other was open. "The Jewish masses do not properly understand the language of the national sentiment. Our endeavour must be to make actions speak to them in a language which they do understand—the language of self-interest. Then calculation will succeed where sentiment cannot."

Now "the language of self-interest" is the language of the struggle for existence, which speaks to each individual in the particular style adapted to his position and ambitions, and to no man in a speech which his neighbour understands; and I for my part am unable to see how it can serve us instead of the unvarying appeal of the national sentiment, which unites all hearts for one aim and one purpose. Even the Utilitarians, who tried to trace all moral and social tendencies to the pursuit of individual advantage, were concerned only to explain the first cause of these tendencies, and to show how they came into existence and developed, as against those who attributed their presence to a direct interposition of Providence. But it is universally admitted that self-interest alone, as it is in itself, cannot provide a basis for any organised society or any great collective effort.

Let us, however, waive that point, and let us hear from our critic's own lips what is the language of self-interest in this matter. "National sentiment," he says,

“is foreign to the spirit of our people. The way to convince them is to show by figures that any industrious and peaceable man will find what he wants in Palestine, provided he has physical strength and capital.” He admits, then, that only a man who has capital and physical strength, and is industrious and peaceable to boot, will find in Palestine what he wants—that is to say, his individual advantage. Now it is difficult to find the last-named qualifications in a Jew who has capital, and is accustomed to make his living easily and to have a great regard for his own dignity; and apart from that, we have to remember that such a man will not easily find what he wants in Palestine. For a man with capital wants not merely plain food and raiment: he wants also the luxuries and pleasures to which he has been used. And if he is thinking of his individual advantage, he will certainly come to the conclusion that it is folly to lay out his capital in purchasing a piece of land in Palestine, where at the very best he will have to work hard without being able to find satisfaction for even a half of his desires. To the truth of this statement our critic himself bears witness. He tells us that “in those days also (*i.e.*, in the beginning of the colonisation work) the movement existed principally among the poor, who hoped to be established by the generosity of others; and the rich held aloof, then as now.” Again: “In the winter of 1881-82 the first emissary travelled to Palestine, bearing written authority from a number of men in good circumstances to purchase land on their behalf. He bought the land of Rishon-le-Zion, but those who had authorised him to buy for them changed their minds.” And again: “Of those who bought plots of land in the colony just mentioned it was only the poor

who went to Palestine ; the rich remained at home." Finally : " The net result of the whole movement was that, with few exceptions, those who remained in Palestine were men in the last stage of poverty." Experience, therefore, teaches us that men of capital, if they understand no language except that of individual self-interest, will not go to find in Palestine " what they want," because they want more than they will find there. Who is there, then, whom figures can persuade or to whom self-interest can recommend Palestine, if those who could go will not, and those who would cannot?

I asked in my article why the idea lost ground among our people from the time when it began to take practical shape in the land. Our critic answers with a sigh : " Our impatient people saw that a long time and a great deal of money would be needed to put the colonies which had been founded into a satisfactory condition, and their courage failed them. For eighteen hundred years we found it possible to exist without moving a finger for the colonisation of our land and the salvation of our people ; but now that we have not been able to make our colonies all that they should be in six years, we lose heart. Are we not an impatient people? " He does not realise that what he attributes to impatience is simply an inevitable result of the appeal to self-interest. For eighteen hundred years we did not move a finger for the colonisation of our land, because we did not expect it to bring us advantage as individuals. In recent years we have paid attention to the colonisation of our land, because reports and statistics have led us to hope that it will bring us advantage as individuals. But now, when we see that a long time and a great deal of money will be needed to put the colonies already founded into a

satisfactory condition, it becomes clear that from the point of view of individual self-interest the thing is not worth while ; and so we have quite justifiably lost heart, and the colonisation of our land has become a charitable affair, which affords a scant subsistence to some hundreds of people "in the last stage of poverty."

Such, then, is the language of individual self-interest. Had our critic really been able to adduce convincing arguments in support of his severe judgment that there never was and never will be any national sentiment among the Jews, and that individual Jews will never be able to rise above "private advantage and individual self-interest," then we might as well throw up the sponge. We should have no right to be called a people or to lay claim to a land. But, luckily for us, his arguments are not so dangerous.

As a general rule, ethnological investigations into the characteristics of different people are extremely speculative and hazardous. One ethnologist set about to collect the opinions of the foremost authorities as to the characteristics of the Arabs, and this is what he found. Some maintain that the Arab is a man of action, concerned only with concrete things, and very weak on the side of imagination ; while others assert that both the Arabs and the Hebrews are strongly imaginative, and that among the Arabs the imagination is always more powerful than the reason. On the other hand, Sprenger regards it as self-evident that the predominance of the imagination over the reason is a characteristic opposed to the Arab spirit, and lays it down as a truth universally recognised that the spirit of the Semitic peoples generally is objective ; whereas Lassen, and after him Renan,

regard it as universally recognised that the fundamental characteristic of the Semitic peoples is subjectivity.¹

If there are these differences of opinion as regards the characteristics of the Arabs, who have never been uprooted and driven into exile, can anybody have the assurance to dogmatise about the characteristics of a people like our own, which has been scattered among different peoples these two thousand years? Can anybody be so all-knowing as to distinguish with precision between those characteristics which are innate and original in us, and those which have been produced in us by our own environment in exile; to trace one by one all the mutations which the original and the acquired traits have undergone in the passage from generation to generation and from land to land; to forecast which of our characteristics may or may not change with a change of environment? Why, here is our critic laying down the law about the Jewish character as though it were something fixed and unchangeable by time or place, while one famous modern writer has picked out the Jews to demonstrate the truth of his theory that national characteristics depend more on environment and social conditions than on heredity, because he finds that our characteristics differ in different countries and change at different periods, according to our environment and the spirit of the people among whom we live.²

This being so, I will not enlarge on the details of our critic's theory as to Jewish characteristics, but will confine myself to that one dangerous characteristic which he attributes to us—the *innate* lack of national sentiment.

¹ A. Müller, *Zeitschrift für Völkerpsychologie*, XIV., p. 435.

² Henry George, *Progress and Poverty*, p. 352.

In my essay I argued thus : Seeing that the Law of Moses is entirely based on the welfare of the whole nation, so much so that it has no need to appeal to belief in future reward and punishment (a belief which was known in Egypt in very early times) in order to satisfy the individual, we are justified in inferring the existence at that time of a very strong national sentiment in the whole people, or the most important section of it ; and it was only through historical circumstances that this sentiment afterwards lost its force. Thus we are at liberty to believe that by appropriate means it is possible to revive to-day in our people a sentiment which it already had in ancient times. To this our critic replies : “ If the Law looked only at the general good, that is not because at a certain time the spirit of individualism did not exist in Israel, but because the Law is practical and reckons with facts. We see that the individual is exposed to all kinds of accidents and misfortunes. How, then, could a practical Law like ours guarantee individual happiness, which is unrealisable? ”

I have tried my hardest, Heaven knows, to discover what this means, but in vain. It simply proves my point. For if Judaism is realistic, and if the happiness of the individual on earth is unrealisable, and if at the same time there was no national sentiment, and the people attached no great importance to the well-being of the nation as a whole—then how could Judaism be content with promising a reward which could not have much value as an incentive to right living, when it might have done as other religions have done, both before and since, and as it did itself at a much later period, in response to the needs of the time : namely, have promised every individual a reward in heaven ?

And our critic gets himself into all this difficulty simply because he finds it stated by Chwolson that all Semites are individualistic by nature. If that is so, we cannot admit the existence of a national sentiment in Israel at any period. Now we have seen above how much reliance can be placed in such matters on the statements of well-known authorities. But if we examine carefully the passage which our critic quotes from Chwolson, we shall be even more surprised at his finding in it sufficient ground for passing such a sweeping judgment on his people. Chwolson says: "There was scarcely ever a strong bond of union between the Jewish tribes. A full national consciousness has never developed very far among Semites. Each tribe is a unity, the members of which are closely bound together among themselves; but there is no feeling of unity between the different tribes." The explanation, according to Chwolson, lies in that individualism "which is especially characteristic of the Semites." But who can show how "a full national consciousness" differs in character from a feeling of love for and attachment to a single tribe? And if it was individualism—and not external circumstances—which prevented the Jewish tribes from being joined by "a strong bond of union," how is it that this individualism allowed each tribe to become a closely-knit unity? Surely, when a man feels it necessary and possible to subordinate his individual interests to those of the larger unit to which he belongs, even if that unit is only a petty tribe, he has already got beyond individualism, and is therefore capable even of "a full national consciousness," provided that there are no external obstacles; and the only difference between the national sentiment of a Frenchman and the tribal senti-

ment of a Montenegrin lies in the magnitude of what inspires the sentiment, not in the character of the sentiment itself. And, in fact, it does happen in all periods, under suitable conditions, that tribal patriotism expands into national patriotism. The ancient Greeks were at first divided into small tribes, continually at war with one another, and it was only at a late period that they acquired the sentiment of national unity. In the Middle Ages the Italian cities were separate and mutually hostile, and yet at last the Italians developed a strong national sentiment. And, to come to recent times, who does not know what the Germans were until a few decades ago? "We still remember," says one of their great writers,¹ "the time when we were justly reproached with being conspicuous among all the civilised peoples of Europe for our lack of a strong and healthy national sentiment." And look at the Germans now!

In a word: the contention that Semites in general, or the Jews in particular, cannot have a national sentiment (a sentiment of which one of the greatest scientists² finds traces even in animals) needs to be supported by weightier evidence.

And until such evidence is forthcoming, "let us not slacken our efforts, and let us avoid undue haste. Let us increase our devotion to our people and our love for our ancestral land, and the God of Zion will help us."

¹ Ed. Zeller, *Vorträge*, II., p. 434.

² Du Bois-Reymond, *Reden*, I., p. 309.

THE FIRST ZIONIST CONGRESS

(1897¹)

The Congress of the Zionists, the subject of a controversy which has filled the emptiness of our little world for some months past, is now a piece of history. About two hundred Jews, of all lands and of all parties, met at Basle, and for three days (29-31 August) from morning till evening they discussed publicly, in the sight of the whole world, the establishment of a secure home for the Jewish people in the land of its ancestors. Thus the *national* answer to the "Jewish problem" came out of its retirement into the light of day, and was proclaimed to the world in ringing tones, in clear language and in manly fashion—a thing the like of which had never happened since the Jews were exiled from their land.

That is all. The Congress could do no more, had need to do no more.

For—why deceive ourselves?—of all the great objects of *Chibbath Zion* (or, as they call it now, "Zionism"), there is only one towards the accomplishment of which we have at present the strength to approach in any appreciable degree, and that is the *moral* object—the emancipation of ourselves from the inner slavery and the spiritual degradation which assimilation has produced

¹ [This note on the first Zionist Congress evoked a storm of indignation, which led the author to explain his views more fully in the essay on "The Jewish State and the Jewish Problem." As to the unwonted harshness of some expressions in the Note, see the concluding paragraph of that essay (p. 55).]

in us, and the strengthening of our national unity by joint action in every sphere of our national life, until we become capable and worthy of a life of dignity and freedom *at some time in the future*. Everything else lies at yet in the realm of idea and imagination. Those who oppose the "Jewish State" doubt whether it will be possible to obtain the consent of the nations, and especially of Turkey, to its establishment. But it seems to me that there is a still more difficult question. If we had this consent, should we, in our present moral condition, be fit to accept it? . . . Nor is that all. One may even doubt whether the establishment of a "Jewish State" at the present time, even in the most complete form that we can imagine, having regard to the general international position, would give us the right to say that our problem had been completely solved, and our national ideal attained. "Reward is proportionate to suffering."¹ After two thousand years of untold misery and suffering, the Jewish people cannot possibly be content with attaining at last to the position of a small and insignificant nation, with a State tossed about like a ball between its powerful neighbours, and maintaining its existence only by diplomatic shifts and continual truckling to the favoured of fortune. An ancient people, which was once a beacon to the world, cannot possibly accept, as a satisfactory reward for all that it has endured, a thing so trifling, which many other peoples, unrenowned and uncultured, have won in a short time, without going through a hundredth part of the suffering. It was not for nothing that Israel had Prophets, whose vision saw Righteousness ruling the world at the end of days. It was their nationalism, their love for their

¹ [A familiar quotation from the Talmud—*Aboth*, V., 23.]

people and their land, that gave the Prophets that vision. For in their day the Jewish State was always between two fires—Assyria or Babylon on one side, and Egypt on the other—and it never had any chance of a peaceful life and natural development. So “Zionism” in the minds of the Prophets expanded, and produced that great vision of the end of days, when the wolf should lie down with the lamb, and nation should no longer lift up the sword against nation—and then Israel too should dwell securely in his land. And so this ideal for humanity has always been and will always be inevitably an essential part of the national ideal of the Jewish people; and a “Jewish State” will be able to give the people rest only when universal Righteousness is enthroned and holds sway over nations and States.

We went to Basle, then, not to found a Jewish State to-day or to-morrow, but to proclaim aloud to all the nations that the Jewish people still lives and desires to live. We *have* to proclaim this in season and out, not in order that the nations may hearken and give us what we want, but primarily in order that we ourselves may hear the echo of our cry in our inmost hearts, and perhaps be roused thereby from our degradation.

This function the Basle Congress fulfilled admirably in its opening stages; and for this it would have deserved eternal commemoration in letters of gold—had it not tried to do more.

Once again our impatience, that curse which dogs us and ruins all that we do, had full rein. If those who convened the Congress had armed themselves with patience, and had begun by stating clearly that the Messiah was not yet in sight, and that for the moment we could achieve nothing beyond what words and enthu-

siasm could do—the revival of our national spirit, and the announcement of this revival in a public manner—then, no doubt, the Congress would have been much less well attended than it was, and one day would have sufficed for its business instead of three : but that one day would have been worth whole generations, and the delegates, the chosen of our people (for only the chosen of our people would have been interested in such a Congress) would have returned to their several homes filled with life and determination and new-born energy, to impart their life and determination and energy to the whole people.

But as it is

The founders of this movement are “Europeans,” and, being expert in the ways of diplomacy and the procedure of latter-day political parties, they bring these ways and procedure with them to the “Jewish State.” Emissaries were sent out before the Congress, and various hints were spread abroad in writing and by word of mouth, so as to arouse in the masses an exaggerated hope of imminent redemption. Thus was kindled the false fire of a feverish enthusiasm, which brought to the Basle Congress a rabble of youngsters—in years or in understanding—and their senseless proceedings robbed it of its bloom and made it a mockery.

Councils large and small, committees without number, a sheaf of fantastic proposals about a “National Fund,”¹ and the rest of the *haute politique* of the Jewish State—these are the “practical” results of the Congress. How could it be otherwise? Most of the delegates, representing the down-trodden Jews who long for redemption,

¹ The capital then suggested was ten million pounds !

were sent for one purpose and on one understanding only—that they should bring redemption back with them. How could they return home without being able to announce that the management of the “State” in all its various branches had been put in good hands, and that all the important questions connected with it had been raised and examined and solved?

History repeats itself. Seven years ago our people looked to the Executive Committee¹ at Jaffa as it looks now to the Basle Congress. A large number of people went to Palestine, thinking to buy the land and to build dozens of colonies in a single day. Hope and enthusiasm grew day by day, not less than now. Then also *haute politique*—though in a different form—was our undoing. The leaders of the movement aroused an artificial exaltation in the people by promises and expectations which were not destined to be fulfilled; and this exaltation could not last long. The dream fled, eyes were opened, and disappointment begat despair. At that time, in the midst of the hubbub and enthusiasm, I ventured to tell the public the bitter truth,² to warn the people not to be led astray by false hopes: and many regarded me as a traitor to my people, as one who hindered the redemption. Now we have seen these same men, the “practical” men of that day, among the delegates at Basle, crowning the new movement with wreaths, and making game of “practical colonisation”—as though they had completely forgotten that the responsibility for what has happened to the colonisation work lies not on the work itself, but on them, because

¹ [Of the *Chovevé Zion*.]

² [The reference is to an article called “The Truth about Palestine,” written after the author’s first visit to that country in 1891.]

they carried it on by crooked methods and turned it from its true purpose, in order to create a great popular movement at a single stroke.

At Basle, as at Jaffa, I sat solitary among my friends, like a mourner at a wedding-feast. But now, as then, I may not hold back the truth. Let others say what they will, out of too much simplicity or for worse reasons : I cannot refrain from uttering a warning that danger is at hand and the reaction is close upon us. To-day, as before, the enthusiasm is artificial, and in the end it will lead to the despair that follows disillusionment.

Seven years ago the delegates returned from Jaffa full of good tidings. Redemption had come to the land, and we had nothing to do but wait till the vine bore its fruit. Now the delegates return and tell us that redeemers have arisen for Israel, and we have nothing to do but wait till diplomacy finishes its work. And now, as then, the eyes of the people will soon be opened, and they will see that they have been misled. The fire suddenly kindled by hope will die down again, perhaps to the very last spark.

Could I command the waters of Lethe, I would see that everything that the delegates saw and heard at Basle was effaced from their recollection, and would leave them only one memory : that of the great and sacred hour when they all—these down-trodden Jews who came from the ends of the earth—stood up together like brothers, their hearts full of sacred emotion and their eyes lifted up in love and pride towards their great brother-Jew,¹ who stood on the platform and spoke wonders of his people, like one of the Prophets of old. The memory of that hour, were it not that many other

¹ [Dr. Max Nordau.]

hours which followed dimmed the purity of the first impression, might have made this Congress one of the most momentous events in our history.

The salvation of Israel will be achieved by *Prophets*, not by *diplomats*. . . .

THE JEWISH STATE AND THE JEWISH PROBLEM

(1897¹)

Some months have passed since the Zionist Congress, but its echoes are still heard in daily life and in the press. In daily life the echoes take the form of meetings small and big, local and central. Since the delegates returned home, they have been gathering the public together and recounting over and over again the wonders that they saw enacted before their eyes. The wretched, hungry public listens and waxes enthusiastic and hopes for salvation: for can "they"—the Jews of the West—fail to carry out anything that they plan? Heads grow hot and hearts beat fast; and many "communal workers" whose one care in life had been for years—until last August—the Palestinian settlement, and who would have given the whole world for a penny donation in aid of Palestine workmen or the Jaffa School, have now quite lost their bearings, and ask one another: "What's the good of this sort of work? The Messiah is near at hand, and we busy ourselves with trifles! The time has come for great deeds: great men, men of the West, march before us in the van."—There has been a revolution in their world, and to emphasise it they give a new name to the cause: it is no longer "Love of Zion" (*Chibbath Zion*), but "Zionism" (*Zioniyuth*). Nay, the more careful among them, determined to leave no loop-hole for error, even keep the European form of the name

¹ [One of a series of three essays on "Political Zionism."]

("Zionismus")—thus announcing to all and sundry that they are not talking about anything so antiquated as *Chibbath Zion*, but about a new, up-to-date movement, which comes, like its name, from the West, where people do not use Hebrew.

In the press all these meetings, with their addresses, motions and resolutions, appear over again in the guise of articles—articles written in a vein of enthusiasm and triumph. The meeting was magnificent, every speaker was a Demosthenes, the resolutions were carried by acclamation, all those present were swept off their feet and shouted with one voice: "We will do and obey!"—in a word, everything was delightful, entrancing, perfect. And the Congress itself still produces a literature of its own. Pamphlets specially devoted to its praises appear in several languages; Jewish and non-Jewish papers still occasionally publish articles and notes about it; and, needless to say, the "Zionist" organ¹ itself endeavours to maintain the impression which the Congress made, and not to allow it to fade too rapidly from the public memory. It searches the press of every nation and every land, and wherever it finds a favourable mention of the Congress, even in some insignificant journal published in the language of one of the smaller European nationalities, it immediately gives a summary of the article, with much jubilation. Only one small nation's language has thus far not been honoured with such attention, though its journals too have lavished praise on the Congress: I mean Hebrew.

In short, the universal note is one of rejoicing; and it is therefore small wonder that in the midst of this general harmony my little Note on the Congress sounded

¹ [*Die Welt*, the German organ founded by Herzl.]

discordant and aroused the most violent displeasure in many quarters. I knew from the start that I should not be forgiven for saying such things at such a time, and I had steeled myself to hear with equanimity the clatter of high-sounding phrases and obscure innuendoes—of which our writers are so prolific—and hold my peace. But when I was attacked by M. L. Lilienblum,¹ a writer whose habit it is not to write *àpropos des bottes* for the sake of displaying his style, I became convinced that this time I had really relied too much on the old adage : *Verbum sapienti satis*. It is not pleasant to swim against the stream ; and when one does something without enjoyment, purely as a duty, one does not put more than the necessary minimum of work into the task. Hence in the note referred to I allowed myself to be extremely brief, relying on my readers to fill in the gaps out of their own knowledge, by connecting what I wrote with earlier expressions of my views, which were already familiar to them. I see now that I made a mistake, and left room for the ascription to me of ideas and opinions which are utterly remote from my true intention. Consequently I have now to perform the hard and ungrateful task of writing a commentary on myself, and expressing my views on the matter in hand with greater explicitness.

Nordau's address on the general condition of the Jews was a sort of introduction to the business of the Congress. It exposed in incisive language the sore troubles, material or moral, which beset the Jews the world over. In Eastern countries their trouble is material : they have

¹ [The first Secretary of the *Chovevé Zion*, and an opponent of the "spiritual" ideas of Achad Ha-Am.]

a constant struggle to satisfy the most elementary physical needs, to win a crust of bread and a breath of air—things which are denied them because they are Jews. In the West, in lands of emancipation, their material condition is not particularly bad, but the moral trouble is serious. They want to take full advantage of their rights, and cannot; they long to become attached to the people of the country, and to take part in its social life, and they are kept at arm's length; they strive after love and brotherhood, and are met by looks of hatred and contempt on all sides; conscious that they are not inferior to their neighbours in any kind of ability or virtue, they have it continually thrown in their teeth that they are an inferior type, and are not fit to rise to the same level as the Aryans. And more to the same effect.

Well—what then?

Nordau himself did not touch on this question: it was outside the scope of his address. But the whole Congress was the answer. Beginning as it did with Nordau's address, the Congress meant this: that in order to escape from all these troubles it is necessary to establish a Jewish State.

Let us imagine, then, that the consent of Turkey and the other Powers has already been obtained, and the State is established—and, if you will, established *völkerrechtlich*, with the full sanction of international law, as the more extreme members of the Congress desire. Does this bring, or bring near, the end of the material trouble? No doubt, every poor Jew will be at perfect liberty to go to his State and to seek his living there, without any artificial hindrances in the shape of restrictive laws or anything of that kind. But liberty to *seek* a livelihood is not enough: he must be able to *find*

what he seeks. There are natural laws which fetter man's freedom of action much more than artificial laws. Modern economic life is so complex, and the development of any single one of its departments depends on so many conditions, that no nation, not even the strongest and richest, could in a short time create in any country new sources of livelihood sufficient for many millions of human beings. The single country is no longer an economic unit: the whole world is one great market, in which every State has to struggle hard for its place. Hence only a fantasy bordering on madness can believe that so soon as the Jewish State is established millions of Jews will flock to it, and the land will afford them adequate sustenance. Think of the labour and the money that had to be sunk in Palestine over a long period of years before one new branch of production—vine-growing—could be established there! And even to-day, after all the work that has been done, we cannot yet say that Palestinian wine has found the openings that it needs in the world market, although its quantity is still small. But if in 1891 Palestine had been a Jewish State, and all the dozens of Colonies that were then going to be established for the cultivation of the vine had in fact been established, Palestinian wine would be to-day as common as water, and would fetch no price at all. Using the analogy of this small example, we can see how difficult it will be to start new branches of production in Palestine, and to find openings for its products in the world market. But if the Jews are to flock to their State in large numbers, all at once, we may prophesy with perfect certainty that home competition in every branch of production (and home competition will be inevitable, because the amount of labour available

will increase more quickly than the demand for it) will prevent any one branch from developing as it should. And then the Jews will turn and leave their State, flying from the most deadly of all enemies—an enemy not to be kept off even by the magic word *völkerrechtlich* : from hunger.

True, agriculture in its elementary form does not depend to any great extent on the world market, and at any rate it will provide those engaged in it with food, if not with plenty. But if the Jewish State sets out to save all those Jews who are in the grip of the material problems, or most of them, by turning them into agriculturists in Palestine, then it must first find the necessary capital. At Basle, no doubt, one heard naïve and confident references to a “National Fund” of ten million pounds sterling. But even if we silence reason, and give the rein to fancy so far as to believe that we can obtain a Fund of those dimensions in a short time, we are still no further. Those very speeches that we heard at Basle about the economic condition of the Jews in various countries showed beyond a doubt that our national wealth is very small, and most of our people are below the poverty-line. From this any man of sense, though he be no great mathematician, can readily calculate that ten million pounds are a mere nothing compared with the sum necessary for the emigration of the Jews and their settlement in Palestine on an agricultural basis. Even if all the rich Jews suddenly became ardent “Zionists,” and every one of them gave half his wealth to the cause, the whole would still not make up the thousands of millions that would be needed for the purpose.

There is no doubt, then, that even when the Jewish

State is established the Jews will be able to settle in it only little by little, the determining factors being the resources of the people themselves and the degree of economic development reached by the country. Meanwhile the natural increase of population will continue, both among those who settle in the country and among those who remain outside it, with the inevitable result that on the one hand Palestine will have less and less room for new immigrants, and on the other hand the number of those remaining outside Palestine will not diminish very much, in spite of the continual emigration. In his opening speech at the Congress, Dr. Herzl, wishing to demonstrate the superiority of his State idea over the method of Palestinian colonisation adopted hitherto, calculated that by the latter method it would take nine hundred years before all the Jews could be settled in their land. The members of the Congress applauded this as a conclusive argument. But it was a cheap victory. The Jewish State itself, do what it will, cannot make a more favourable calculation.

Truth is bitter, but with all its bitterness it is better than illusion. We must confess to ourselves that the "ingathering of the exiles" is unattainable by natural means. We may, by natural means, establish a Jewish State one day, and the Jews may increase and multiply in it until the country will hold no more : but even then the greater part of the people will remain scattered in strange lands. "To gather our scattered ones from the four corners of the earth" (in the words of the Prayer Book) is impossible. Only religion, with its belief in a miraculous redemption, can promise that consummation.

But if this is so, if the Jewish State too means not an

“ingathering of the exiles,” but the settlement of a small part of our people in Palestine, then how will it solve the material problem of the Jewish masses in the lands of the Diaspora?

Or do the champions of the State idea think, perhaps, that, being masters in our own country, we shall be able by diplomatic means to get the various governments to relieve the material sufferings of our scattered fellow-Jews? That is, it seems to me, Dr. Herzl's latest theory. In his new pamphlet (*Der Baseler Kongress*) we no longer find any calculation of the number of years that it will take for the Jews to enter their country. Instead, he tells us in so many words (p. 9) that if the land becomes the *national* property of the Jewish people, even though no individual Jew owns privately a single square yard of it, then the Jewish problem will be solved for ever. These words (unless we exclude the material aspect of the Jewish problem) can be understood only in the way suggested above. But this hope seems to me so fantastic that I see no need to waste words in demolishing it. We have seen often enough, even in the case of nations more in favour than Jews are with powerful Governments, how little diplomacy can do in matters of this kind, if it is not backed by a large armed force. Nay, it is conceivable that in the days of the Jewish State, when economic conditions in this or that country are such as to induce a Government to protect its people against Jewish competition by restrictive legislation, that Government will find it easier then than it is now to find an excuse for such action, for it will be able to plead that if the Jews are not happy where they are, they can go to their own State.

The material problem, then, will not be ended by the foundation of a Jewish State, nor, generally speaking,

does it lie in our power to end it (though it could be eased more or less even now by various means, such as the encouragement of agriculture and handicrafts among Jews in all countries); and whether we found a State or not, this particular problem will always turn at bottom on the economic condition of each country and the degree of civilisation attained by each people.

Thus we are driven to the conclusion that the only true basis of Zionism is to be found in the other problem, the moral one.

But the moral problem appears in two forms, one in the West and one in the East; and this fact explains the fundamental difference between Western "Zionism" and Eastern *Chibbath Zion*. Nordau dealt only with the Western problem, apparently knowing nothing about the Eastern; and the Congress as a whole concentrated on the first, and paid little attention to the second.

The Western Jew, after leaving the Ghetto and seeking to attach himself to the people of the country in which he lives, is unhappy because his hope of an open-armed welcome is disappointed. He returns reluctantly to his own people, and tries to find within the Jewish community that life for which he yearns—but in vain. Communal life and communal problems no longer satisfy him. He has already grown accustomed to a broader social and political life; and on the intellectual side Jewish cultural work has no attraction, because Jewish culture has played no part in his education from childhood, and is a closed book to him. So in his trouble he turns to the land of his ancestors, and pictures to himself how good it would be if a Jewish State were re-established there—a State arranged and organised exactly after the pattern of other States. Then he

could live a full, complete life among his own people, and find at home all that he now sees outside, dangled before his eyes, but out of reach. Of course, not all the Jews will be able to take wing and go to their State ; but the very existence of the Jewish State will raise the prestige of those who remain in exile, and their fellow citizens will no more despise them and keep them at arm's length, as though they were ignoble slaves, dependent entirely on the hospitality of others. As he contemplates this fascinating vision, it suddenly dawns on his inner consciousness that even now, before the Jewish State is established, the mere idea of it gives him almost complete relief. He has an opportunity for organised work, for political excitement ; he finds a suitable field of activity without having to become subservient to non-Jews ; and he feels that thanks to this ideal he stands once more spiritually erect, and has regained human dignity, without overmuch trouble and without external aid. So he devotes himself to the ideal with all the ardour of which he is capable ; he gives rein to his fancy, and lets it soar as it will, up above reality and the limitations of human power. For it is not the attainment of the ideal that he needs : its pursuit alone is sufficient to cure him of his moral sickness, which is the consciousness of inferiority ; and the higher and more distant the ideal, the greater its power of exaltation.

This is the basis of Western Zionism and the secret of its attraction. But Eastern *Chibbath Zion* has a different origin and development. Originally, like "Zionism," it was political ; but being a result of material evils, it could not rest satisfied with an "activity" consisting only of outbursts of feeling and fine phrases. These things may satisfy the heart, but

not the stomach. So *Chibbath Zion* began at once to express itself in concrete activities—in the establishment of colonies in Palestine. This practical work soon clipped the wings of fancy, and made it clear that *Chibbath Zion* could not lessen the material evil by one iota. One might have thought, then, that when this fact became patent the *Chovevé Zion* would give up their activity, and cease wasting time and energy on work which brought them no nearer their goal. But, no : they remained true to their flag, and went on working with the old enthusiasm, though most of them did not understand even in their own minds why they did so. They felt instinctively that so they must do ; but as they did not clearly appreciate the nature of this feeling, the things that they did were not always rightly directed towards that object which in reality was drawing them on without their knowledge.

For at the very time when the material tragedy in the East was at its height, the heart of the Eastern Jew was still oppressed by another tragedy—the moral one ; and when the *Chovevé Zion* began to work for the solution of the material problem, the national instinct of the people felt that just in such work could it find the remedy for its moral trouble. Hence the people took up this work and would not abandon it even after it had become obvious that the material trouble could not be cured in this way. The Eastern form of the moral trouble is absolutely different from the Western. In the West it is the problem of the Jews, in the East the problem of Judaism. The one weighs on the individual, the other on the nation. The one is felt by Jews who have had a European education, the other by Jews whose education has been Jewish. The one is a product of anti-Semitism,

and is dependent on anti-Semitism for its existence ; the other is a natural product of a real link with a culture of thousands of years, which will retain its hold even if the troubles of the Jews all over the world come to an end, together with anti-Semitism, and all the Jews in every land have comfortable positions, are on the best possible terms with their neighbours, and are allowed by them to take part in every sphere of social and political life on terms of absolute equality.

It is not only Jews who have come out of the Ghetto : Judaism has come out, too. For Jews the exodus is confined to certain countries, and is due to toleration ; but Judaism has come out (or is coming out) of its own accord wherever it has come into contact with modern culture. This contact with modern culture overturns the defences of Judaism from within, so that Judaism can no longer remain isolated and live a life apart. The spirit of our people strives for development : it wants to absorb those elements of general culture which reach it from outside, to digest them and to make them a part of itself, as it has done before at different periods of its history. But the conditions of its life in exile are not suitable. In our time culture wears in each country the garb of the national spirit, and the stranger who would woo her must sink his individuality and become absorbed in the dominant spirit. For this reason Judaism in exile cannot develop its individuality in its own way. When it leaves the Ghetto walls it is in danger of losing its essential being or—at best—its national unity : it is in danger of being split up into as many kinds of Judaism, each with a different character and life, as there are countries of the Jewish dispersion.¹

¹ See my essay *Imitation and Assimilation*. [Selected essays by Achad Ha-Am, pp. 107-124.]

And now Judaism finds that it can no longer tolerate the *galuth*¹ form which it had to take on, in obedience to its will-to-live, when it was exiled from its own country, and that if it loses that form its life is in danger. So it seeks to return to its historic centre, in order to live there a life of natural development, to bring its powers into play in every department of human culture, to develop and perfect those national possessions which it has acquired up to now, and thus to contribute to the common stock of humanity, in the future as in the past, a great national culture, the fruit of the unhampered activity of a people living according to its own spirit. For this purpose Judaism needs at present but little. It needs not an independent State, but only the creation in its native land of conditions favourable to its development: a good-sized settlement of Jews working *without hindrance*² in every branch of culture, from agriculture and handicrafts to science and literature. This Jewish settlement, which will be a gradual growth, will become in course of time the centre of the nation, wherein its spirit will find pure expression and develop in all its aspects up to the highest degree of perfection of which it is capable. Then from this centre the spirit of Judaism will go forth to the great circumference, to all the communities of the Diaspora, and will breathe new

¹ [*Galuth*—"exile"—is the word commonly used by Jews to denote the condition of the Jewish people so long as it is not in its own land, Palestine.]

² The "political" Zionists generally think and say that they were the first to lay it down as a principle that the colonisation of Palestine by secret and surreptitious means, without organisation and in defiance of the ruling Power, is of no value and ought to be abandoned. They do not know that this truth was discovered by others first, and that years ago the *Chibbath Zion* of Judaism demanded that everything should be done openly, with proper organisation and with the consent of the Turkish Government.

life into them and preserve their unity; and when our national culture in Palestine has attained that level, we may be confident that it will produce men in the country who will be able, on a favourable opportunity, to establish a State which will be a *Jewish* State, and not merely a State of Jews.

This *Chibbath Zion*, which takes thought for the preservation of Judaism at a time when Jewry suffers so much, is something odd and unintelligible to the "political" Zionists of the West, just as the demand of R. Jochanan ben Zakkai for Jabneh was strange and unintelligible to the corresponding people of that time.¹ And so political Zionism cannot satisfy those Jews who care for Judaism: its growth seems to them to be fraught with danger to the object of their own aspiration.

The secret of our people's persistence is—as I have tried to show elsewhere²—that at a very early period the Prophets taught it to respect only spiritual power, and not to worship material power. For this reason the clash with enemies stronger than itself never brought the Jewish nation, as it did the other nations of antiquity, to the point of self-effacement. So long as we are faithful to this principle, our existence has a secure basis: for in spiritual power we are not inferior to other nations, and we have no reason to efface ourselves. But a political ideal *which does not rest on the national culture* is apt to seduce us from our loyalty to spiritual

¹ [After the fall of Jerusalem in 70 C.E., Titus asked Rabbi Jochanan, one of the leading Jews of the time, what he wanted. The reply was, "Give me Jabneh and its scholars." The Rabbi understood—though the Roman conqueror did not—that in the conditions then existing a centre of Jewish learning would do more to preserve Israel than political institutions.]

² In *Imitation and Assimilation*.

greatness, and to beget in us a tendency to find the path of glory in the attainment of material power and political dominion, thus breaking the thread that unites us with the past, and undermining our historical basis. Needless to say, if the political ideal is not attained, it will have disastrous consequences, because we shall have lost the old basis without finding a new one. But even if it is attained under present conditions, when we are a scattered people not only in the physical but also in the spiritual sense—even then Judaism will be in great danger. Almost all our great men, those, that is, whose education and social position fit them to be at the head of a Jewish State, are spiritually far removed from Judaism, and have no true conception of its nature and its value. Such men, however loyal to their State and devoted to its interests, will necessarily regard those interests as bound up with the foreign culture which they themselves have imbibed ; and they will endeavour, by moral persuasion or even by force, to implant that culture in the Jewish State, so that in the end the Jewish State will be a State of Germans or Frenchmen of the Jewish race. We have even now a small example of this process in Palestine.¹ And history teaches us that in the days of the Herodian house Palestine was indeed a Jewish State, but the national culture was despised and persecuted, and the ruling house did everything in its power to implant Roman culture in the country, and frittered away the national resources in the building of heathen temples and amphitheatres and so forth. Such

¹[The reference here is to the schools of the *Alliance Israélite Universelle*, which were French in spirit. Many years after this essay was written, in 1913, the Germanising tendencies of the schools maintained by the *Hilfsverein der deutschen Juden* in Palestine led to an acute conflict between that body and the Zionists.]

a Jewish State would spell death and utter degradation for our people. We should never achieve sufficient political power to deserve respect, while we should miss the living moral force within. The puny State, being “tossed about like a ball between its powerful neighbours, and maintaining its existence only by diplomatic shifts and continual truckling to the favoured of fortune,” would not be able to give us a feeling of national glory; and the national culture, in which we might have sought and found our glory, would not have been implanted in our State and would not be the principle of its life. So we should really be then—much more than we are now—“a small and insignificant nation,” enslaved *in spirit* to “the favoured of fortune,” turning an envious and covetous eye on the armed force of our “powerful neighbours”; and our existence as a sovereign State would not add a glorious chapter to our national history. Were it not better for “an ancient people which was once a beacon to the world” to disappear than to end by reaching such a goal as this?¹ Mr. Lilienblum reminds me that there are in our time small States, like Switzerland, which are safeguarded against interference by the other nations, and have no need of “continual truckling.” But a comparison between Palestine and small countries like Switzerland overlooks the geographical position of Palestine and its religious importance for all nations. These two facts will make it quite impossible for its “powerful neighbours” (by which expression, of course, I did not mean, as Mr. Lilienblum interprets, “the Druses and the Persians”)

¹ The phrases in inverted commas are taken from my note on the Congress. As my critics have misinterpreted them, I have taken this opportunity of explaining their true meaning.

to leave it alone altogether ; and when it has become a Jewish State they will all still keep an eye on it, and each Power will try to influence its policy in a direction favourable to itself, just as we see happening in the case of other weak states (like Turkey) in which the great European nations have " interests."

In a word : *Chibbath Zion*, no less than " Zionism," wants a Jewish State and believes in the possibility of the establishment of a Jewish State in the future. But while " Zionism " looks to the Jewish State to provide a remedy for poverty, complete tranquillity and national glory, *Chibbath Zion* knows that our State will not give us all these things until " universal Righteousness is enthroned and holds sway over nations and States " : and it looks to a Jewish State to provide only a " secure refuge " for Judaism and a cultural bond of unity for our nation. " Zionism," therefore, begins its work with political propaganda ; *Chibbath Zion* begins with national culture, because only through the national culture and for its sake can a Jewish State be established in such a way as to correspond with the will and the needs of the Jewish people.

Dr. Herzl, it is true, said in the speech mentioned above that " Zionism " demands the return to Judaism before the return to the Jewish State. But these nice-sounding words are so much at variance with his deeds that we are forced to the unpleasant conclusion that they are nothing but a well-turned phrase.

It is very difficult for me to deal with individual actions, on which one cannot touch without reflecting on individual men. For this reason I contented myself, in my note on the Congress, with general allusions, which, I believed, would be readily intelligible to those

who were versed in the subject, and especially to Congress delegates. But some of my opponents have turned this scrupulousness to use against me by pretending not to understand at all. They ask, with affected simplicity, what fault I have to find with the Congress, and they have even the assurance to deny publicly facts which are common knowledge. These tactics constrain me here, against my will, to raise the artistic veil which they have cast over the whole proceedings, and to mention some details which throw light on the character of this movement and the mental attitude of its adherents.

If it were really the aim of "Zionism" to bring the people back to Judaism—to make it not merely a nation in the political sense, but a nation living according to its own spirit—then the Congress would not have postponed questions of national culture—of language and literature, of education and the diffusion of Jewish knowledge—to the very last moment, after the end of all the debates on *rechtlich* and *völkerrechtlich*, on the election of X. as a member of the Committee, on the imaginary millions, and so forth. When all those present were tired out, and welcomed the setting sun on the last day as a sign of the approaching end, a short time was allowed for a discourse by one of the members on all those important questions, which are in reality the most vital and essential questions. Naturally, the discourse, however good, had to be hurried and shortened; there was no time for discussion of details; a suggestion was made from the platform that all these problems should be handed over to a Commission consisting of certain writers, who were named; and the whole assembly agreed simply for the sake of finishing the business and getting away.

But there is no need to ascertain the attitude of the Congress by inference, because it was stated quite explicitly in one of the official speeches—a speech which appeared on the agenda as “An Exposition of the basis of Zionism,” and was submitted to Dr. Herzl before it was read to the Congress. In this speech we were told plainly that the Western Jews were nearer than those of the East to the goal of Zionism, because they had already done half the work: they had annihilated the Jewish culture of the Ghetto, and were thus emancipated from the yoke of the past. This speech, too, was received with prolonged applause, and the Congress passed a motion ordering it to be published as a pamphlet for distribution among Jews.

In one of the numbers of the Zionist organ *Die Welt* there appeared a good allegorical description of those Jews who remained in the National German party in Austria even after it had united with the anti-Semites. The allegory is of an old lady whose lover deserts her for another, and who, after trying without success to bring him back by all the arts which used to win him, begins to display affection for his new love, hoping that he may take pity on her for her magnanimity.

I have a shrewd suspicion that this allegory can equally well be applied, with a slight change, to its inventors themselves. There is an old lady who, despairing utterly of regaining her lover by entreaties, submission and humility, suddenly decks herself out in splendour and begins to treat him with hatred and contempt. Her object is still to influence him. She wants him at least to respect her in his heart of hearts, if he can no longer love her. Whoever reads *Die Welt* attentively and critically will not be able to avoid the impression that

the Western "Zionists" always have their eyes fixed on the non-Jewish world, and that they, like the assimilated Jews, are aiming simply at finding favour in the eyes of the nations: only that whereas the others want love, the "Zionists" want respect. They are enormously pleased when a Gentile says openly that the "Zionists" deserve respect, when a journal prints some reference to the "Zionists" without making a joke of them, and so forth. Nay, at the last sitting of the Congress the President found it necessary publicly to tender special thanks to the three Gentiles who had honoured the meeting by taking part in it, although they were all three silent members, and there is no sign of their having done anything. If I wished to go into small details, I could show from various incidents that in their general conduct and procedure these "Zionists" do not try to get close to Jewish culture and imbibe its spirit, but that, on the contrary, they endeavour to imitate, as Jews, the conduct and procedure of the Germans, even where they are most foreign to the Jewish spirit, as a means of showing that Jews, too, can live and act like all other nations. It may suffice to mention the unpleasant incident at Vienna recently, when the young "Zionists" went out to spread the gospel of "Zionism" with sticks and fisticuffs, in German fashion. And the Zionist organ regarded this incident sympathetically, and, for all its carefulness, could not conceal its satisfaction at the success of the Zionist fist.

The whole Congress, too, was designed rather as a demonstration to the world than as a means of making it clear to ourselves what we want and what we can do. The founders of the movement wanted to show the outside world that they had behind them a united and

unanimous Jewish people. It must be admitted that from beginning to end they pursued this object with clear consciousness and determination. In those countries where Jews are preoccupied with material troubles, and are not likely on the whole to get enthusiastic about a political ideal for the distant future, a special emissary went about, before the Congress, spreading favourable reports, from which it might be concluded that both the consent of Turkey and the necessary millions were nearly within our reach, and that nothing was lacking except a national representative body to negotiate with all parties on behalf of the Jewish people: for which reason it was necessary to send many delegates to the Congress, and also to send in petitions with thousands of signatures, and then the Committee to be chosen by the Congress would be the body which was required.¹ On the other hand, they were careful not to announce clearly in advance that Herzl's Zionism, and that only, would be the basis of the Congress, that that basis would be above criticism, and no delegate to the Congress would have the right to question it. The Order of Proceedings, which was sent out with the invitation to the Congress, said merely in general terms that anybody could be a delegate "who expresses his agreement with the *general* programme of Zionism," without explaining what the general programme was or where it could be found. Thus there met at Basle men utterly at variance with one another in their views and aspirations. They thought in their simplicity that everybody whose gaze was turned Zion-

¹ The fact mentioned is familiar to many *Chovevé Zion* in all the towns which the emissary visited with a letter from the headquarters of the movement. In my Note I only alluded to it briefly, and I am sorry that the denials of my opponents have compelled me here to refer to it again more fully.

wards, though he did not see eye to eye with Herzl, had done his duty to the general programme and had a right to be a member of the Congress and to express his views before it. But the heads of the Congress tried with all their might to prevent any difference of opinion on fundamental questions from coming to the surface, and used every "parliamentary" device to avoid giving opportunity for discussion and elucidation of such questions. The question of the programme actually came up at one of the preliminary meetings held before the Congress itself (a *Vorkonferenz*); and some of the delegates from Vienna pointed to the statement on the Order of Proceedings, and tried to prove from it that that question could not properly be raised, since all the delegates had accepted the general programme of Zionism, and there was no Zionism but that of Vienna, and *Die Welt* was its prophet. But many of those present would not agree, and a Commission had to be appointed to draw up a programme. This Commission skilfully contrived a programme capable of a dozen interpretations, to suit all tastes; and this programme was put before Congress with a request that it should be accepted as it stood, without any discussion. But one delegate refused to submit, and his action led to a long debate on a single word. This debate showed, to the consternation of many people, that there were several kind of "Zionists," and the cloak of unanimity was in danger of being publicly rent asunder; but the leaders quickly and skilfully patched up the rent, before it had got very far. Dr. Herzl, in his new pamphlet, uses this to prove what great importance Zionists attached to this single word (*völkerrechtlich*). But in truth similar "dangerous" debates might have been raised on many other words.

For many delegates quite failed to notice the wide gulf between the various views on points of principle, and a discussion on any such point was calculated to open people's eyes and to shatter the whole structure to atoms. But such discussions were not raised, because even the few who saw clearly and understood the position shrank from the risk of "wrecking." And so the object was attained; the illusion of unanimity was preserved till the last; the outside world saw a united people demanding a State; and those who were inside returned home full of enthusiasm, but no whit the clearer as to their ideas or the relation of one idea to another.

Yet, after all, I confess that Western "Zionism" is very good and useful for those Western Jews who have long since almost forgotten Judaism, and have no link with their people except a vague sentiment which they themselves do not understand. The establishment of a Jewish State by their agency is at present but a distant vision; but the idea of a State induces them meanwhile to devote their energies to the service of their people, lifts them out of the mire of assimilation, and strengthens their Jewish national consciousness. Possibly, when they find out that it will be a long time before we have policemen and watchmen of our own, many of them may leave us altogether; but even then our loss through this movement will not be greater than our gain, because undoubtedly there will be among them men of larger heart, who, in course of time, will be moved to get to the bottom of the matter and to understand their people and its spirit: and these men will arrive of themselves at that genuine *Chibbath Zion* which is in harmony with our national spirit. But in the East, the home of refuge of Judaism and the birthplace of Jewish *Chibbath Zion*,

this "political" tendency can bring us only harm. Its attractive force is at the same time a force repellent to the moral ideal which has till now been the inspiration of Eastern Jewry. Those who now abandon that ideal in exchange for the political idea will never return again, not even when the excitement dies down and the State is not established: for rarely in history do we find a movement retracing its steps before it has tried to go on and on, and finally lost its way. When, therefore, I see what chaos this movement has brought into the camp of the Eastern *Chovevé Zion*—when I see men who till recently seemed to know what they wanted and how to get it, now suddenly deserting the flag which but yesterday they held sacred, and bowing the knee to an idea which has no roots in their being, simply because it comes from the West: when I see all this, and remember how many paroxysms of sudden and evanescent enthusiasm we have already experienced, then I really feel the heavy hand of despair beginning to lay hold on me.

It was under the stress of that feeling that I wrote my Note on the Congress, a few days after its conclusion. The impression was all very fresh in my mind, and my grief was acute; and I let slip some hard expressions, which I now regret, because it is not my habit to use such expressions. But as regards the actual question at issue I have nothing to withdraw. What has happened since then has not convinced me that I was wrong: on the contrary, it has strengthened my conviction that though I wrote in anger, I did not write in error.

PINSKER AND POLITICAL ZIONISM

*(To the memory of Dr. Pinsker, on the tenth anniversary
of his death)*

(1902)

The 21st of December last (1901) was the tenth anniversary of the death of Dr. Leo Pinsker.

A decade is a long time in our days, when everything keeps changing with extraordinary rapidity ; when events come pell-mell, pushing and jostling one another, with a new sensation every day ; when men rise and fall one after the other, famous to-day and forgotten to-morrow, rising to the top in an hour, and going under in the next ; when the tumult of to-day is so loud that men have no time to pause and look calmly back on yesterday.

Pinsker is one of those men of yesterday, whom the men of to-day have already had time to forget. He died ten years ago, and in these ten years things have changed, and we with them. New birds have come and brought new songs. They pipe in a loud and strident chorus, in the din of which who shall remember the forlorn lay of a lonely songster whom earth knows no more ?

In his day Pinsker was head of the *Chovevé Zion*, and he worked hard for Palestinian colonisation. But in the interval *Chibbath Zion* itself has given place to Zionism.

Petty colonisation, the result of the "infiltration" policy, which absorbed the time and energy of Pinsker and the *Chovevé Zion* of yesterday, is to-day a source of merriment even for the merest tyro in Zionism. Everybody knows that Herzl has enlarged the narrow horizon of his predecessors by basing the Zionist ideal on a broader foundation—on politics and diplomacy, on the Bank and the Charter.

Twenty years ago Pinsker wrote a small pamphlet of thirty-six pages, called *Auto-Emancipation*. In its day this pamphlet made a certain stir and evoked some response. But who pays attention now to a little pamphlet that dates from before the new dispensation? Have we not now the *Judenstaat*, and Reports of four Congresses, full of debates and speeches, as well as a heap of pamphlets and leaflets in every language, explaining and expounding Zionism in every aspect and every detail?

Yes—Pinsker was a great man in his day; he was one of the "precursors" of Zionism—so much even the new Zionists admit. And when they have occasion to recount the history of the Zionist idea to non-Zionists, they begin, in the most approved scientific manner, with the "embryonic" period. Here they commend in one breath all the worthy men who came before the birth of Zionism and prepared the way for it, not forgetting Pinsker and other leaders of the *Chovevé Zion* who were contemporary with him. But all this is for them simply by way of introduction to the main theme, which enters with the year 1896—the year when Herzl revealed himself in his pamphlet *Der Judenstaat*. Here they draw a line, as who should say, "Thus far the embryonic period of Zionism, the period of its preparation for

birth. Now behold Zionism itself in all its glory and magnificence."

How is it, then, that many people have now suddenly remembered that Pinsker died ten years ago, on the 21st of December; and that in so many places there have been prayers recited for the peace of his soul, and memorial addresses delivered in his honour, on this sad anniversary? Truth to tell, it is only because the work of the "petty colonisation" movement still maintains its existence, and there is still a Society which works for the support of the colonies. For that reason, and for that reason alone—because he stood at the head of those who worked for the Palestinian Colonies, and afterwards of the Society formed for their support—Pinsker is remembered by his colleagues, the original *Chovevé Zion* of his own country, whose privilege it was to know him personally and to work with him. It is they who have made the anniversary a matter of public interest. If not for this, the new Zionists, whose calendar begins with the birth of political Zionism, would not have remembered the man who, fifteen years before Herzl, worked out the whole theory of political Zionism from beginning to end, with a logical thoroughness and an elevation of style unequalled by any subsequent work.

How indeed should these new Zionists remember him, seeing that they know nothing at all of Pinsker as the author of the theory of political Zionism? And whence should they know of him, if their leaders have never yet told them, explicitly or by implication, in print or on the platform, in Zionist Congresses or outside them, who was the true author of that theory, the real if unacknowledged fountain from which all who came after him

have drunk?¹ Pinsker's pamphlet in the original German is already out of print and rare. While a stream of new pamphlets, mostly poor and tasteless *rechauffés*, is daily poured forth and spread among the people with the assistance of the Zionist organisation and with the concurrence of its leaders, for propaganda purposes, this pamphlet of Pinsker's, which is uniquely capable of attracting intelligent Jews in every country to the Zionist idea, has not been honoured with a new edition to this day;² and many of the new Zionists, especially in the West, have never seen it, nor even heard of its value.³ All that they hear is that there were Zionists even before Herzl, but they were poor, simple-minded dreamers, who—incapable of comprehending a great political idea—thought to solve the Jewish problem by founding a few colonies in Palestine and supporting them with halfpence; and as for Pinsker—well, he was the leader of these poor visionaries.⁴

¹ We hear now that Herzl commended Pinsker and his pamphlet—for the first time—at one of the sittings of the Fifth Congress. That Congress met at Basle some weeks after the *Chovevé Zion* in Russia had given prominence to Pinsker's name on the anniversary of his death. This is evidence that the President of the Zionist Congress still sometimes pays attention to the public opinion of Russian Jewry. But, of course, this does not affect what is said above.

² [A second edition was published about a year after the appearance of this Essay.]

³ Here is an incident which illustrates the extent to which the contents of Pinsker's pamphlet have been forgotten, even in Russia. A short time ago, some of the Jewish periodicals in Russia published a letter of Pinsker's dating from 1883, which was found among the papers of the Odessa Committee. The letter contains only a few headings of the ideas which are explained in detail in his pamphlet. But the periodicals were surprised, and found it necessary to remark that it appeared *from this letter* that so long as twenty years ago Pinsker had "foreseen, as it were," the Zionist movement of our day.

⁴ In Austria the *Chovevé Zion* used to call themselves "Zionists" long before Herzl's time. I believe that Dr. Birnbaum invented the name in his journal *Selbst-Emanzipation*. Herzl mentions the "Zionists" a few times in his brochure, and satirically represents them as trying to raise a heavy load by the steam of a tea-kettle (*Judenstaat*, p. 4).

I doubt whether the time has yet come to restore to Pinsker the place of honour in the Zionist movement that belongs to him of right. We are in the thick of the tumult and the shouting, and as yet there is no room for a true and unbiassed judgment. That must be left for later history, for the time when "the tumult and the shouting dies," and the influence of personality and fleeting circumstance gives place to a national *motif* more general in scope and more permanent in character. But as the memory of Pinsker is now in the public mind—be it but for a moment—we may not improperly take advantage of the opportunity to recall the message which Pinsker brought to his people, but for which he has not yet received the credit.

That message is, as I have said, the message of *political* Zionism. Pinsker was the first to lay down a clear theoretical basis for political Zionism. He was also the first to work out—though only in outline—a definite practical programme for the realisation of the idea. It is this programme, or the fundamental points in it, that the new Zionists have laid hold on; it is because of this programme that they call themselves "political," denoting thereby, as they believe, the original feature which distinguishes them from their predecessors. Pinsker compressed all his teaching, theoretical and practical as well, into his one small pamphlet, which is characterised by conciseness of style and absence of systematic arrangement. His outraged feelings were too strong for the cold processes of thought, and did not allow him to arrange his ideas systematically. Pinsker did not write a scientific treatise; he uttered a loud, bitter, heart-felt cry, fraught with indignation and grief at our external and internal degradation. For that

reason he must be studied with close attention before one can put together the scattered fragments of ideas—some repeated time and again with a wealth of poetic eloquence, others no more than briefly hinted at by the way—and discover the full import of his teaching.

This is what I propose here to attempt. But first of all I must point out—what might not be self-evident to all my readers—that my object is only to explain Pinsker's teaching in its relation to present-day political Zionism. I am not here giving a statement of my own views on political Zionism in general. What I had to say on that subject has been said in various essays, which will be familiar to many of my readers; and these previous utterances absolve me, I think, from the necessity of commenting here on every point with which I am not in agreement. In this essay I take for granted the fundamental standpoint of political Zionism, which was Pinsker's standpoint also, though, as we shall soon see, he gave it a peculiar turn, making it approximate more to that Zionist ideal which is nowadays called "spiritual Zionism."

Pinsker, like all subsequent political Zionists, arrived at the idea of Zionism not through the problem of Judaism—through the necessity of seeking for a new foundation for our national existence and unity, in place of the old foundation, which is crumbling away—but through the problem of Jewry—through a definite conviction that even emancipation and general progress will not improve the degraded and insecure position of the Jews among the nations, and that anti-Semitism will never cease so long as we have not a national home of our own. But it is worth while to examine particularly

the way in which he arrived at this conviction of the eternity of the feud between Israel and the nations, because it is a different way from that of the later Zionists, and it is this difference that gives a peculiar colouring to Pinsker's message.

Pinsker finds three principal causes which lead to our being hated and despised more than any other human beings; and for each of the three there is no remedy except a separate Jewish State.

(1) The first cause is a national one, and its roots lie deep in human psychology. We cannot know whether that great day will ever arrive when all mankind will live in brotherhood and concord, and national barriers will no longer exist; but even at the best, thousands of years must elapse before that Messianic age. Meanwhile nations live side by side in a state of *relative* peace, which is based chiefly on the fundamental equality between them. Each nation, that is, recognises and admits the national existence of the other nations, and even those which are at enmity or even at war with one another are forced to recognise each other as equals, standing on the same plane of nationhood, and therefore entertain each for the other a certain feeling of respect, without distinction between large nation and small, strong and weak. But it is different with the people of Israel. This people is not counted among the nations, because since it was exiled from its land it has lacked the essential attributes of nationality, by which one nation is distinguished from another—has lacked “that original national life which is inconceivable without community of language and customs and without local contiguity.” It is because we lack these attributes that the other nations do not regard us as on the same plane with them-

selves, as a nation equal to them in integral value. True, we have not ceased even in the lands of our exile to be *spiritually* a distinct nation; but this spiritual nationality, so far from giving us the status of a nation in the eyes of the other nations, is the very cause of their hatred for us as a people. Men are always terrified by a disembodied spirit, a soul wandering about with no physical covering; and terror breeds hatred. This is a form of psychic disease which we are powerless to cure. In all ages men have feared all kinds of ghosts which their imaginations have seen; and Israel appears to them as a ghost—but a ghost which they see with their very eyes, not merely in fancy. Thus the hatred of the nations for Jewish nationality is a psychic disease of the kind known as “demonopathy”; and having been transmitted from generation to generation for some two thousand years, it has by now become so deep-rooted that it can no longer be eradicated. The primary object of this hatred is not Jews as individuals, but Judaism—by which is meant that abstract nationality, that bodiless ghost, which wanders about among the real nations like something apart and different, and arouses their latent faculty of demonophobia. Hence we see on the one hand that individual Gentiles live in peace and amity with their Jewish acquaintances, while retaining their deep-seated animosity against Jews as a people, and on the other hand that, throughout all the periodical changes of national tendencies and international relations, all nations remain at all times the same in their hatred of the Jews, just as they remain always the same in their hatred of the other kinds of ghosts in whose existence they believe.¹

¹ *Autoemancipation*, pp. 1-7 [7-11 in the second edition, 1903.]

What, then, must we do to escape from this national hatred?

Assimilate with the nations? If real assimilation be meant—the assimilation that reaches to the very soul and ends in annihilation—that is a kind of death which does not come of itself, and we do not wish to bring it on by our own efforts.¹ But the surface assimilation which is the panacea advocated by a certain section of Jews can only make matters worse for us. Pinsker himself does not draw this conclusion in so many words; but it is a necessary consequence of the idea just mentioned. For, seeing that the source of anti-Semitism lies in our lack of a concrete national existence, which would compel the other nations to recognise in us a nation equal to themselves in status, it follows plainly that the more we assimilate—the more we imitate our surroundings and whittle away our national distinctiveness—the less concrete and the more spiritual will our national existence become; and the more, therefore, will the ghost-fear which begets anti-Semitism grow in intensity.

There remains, then, but one means of destroying anti-Semitism. We must become again a real nation, possessed of all those essential attributes of nationality by virtue of which one nation is the equal of another. These attributes are those mentioned above—a common land, a common language and common customs. It is the combination of these that makes “an original national life.”²

¹ *ib.* p. 15 [17.]

² Pinsker died before the days of what is now called “spiritual nationalism,” the view which denies the need for a distinct national territory, believing it possible that sooner or later we shall obtain equal rights in the lands of our dispersion as a *nation*: that is, shall be allowed to carry on our distinctive *national* life in these lands, just as we have already obtained equal rights, as *citizens*, in many

The second cause of our degradation is political in character. "Generally speaking," says Pinsker, "we do not find any nation over-fond of the stranger. This is a fact which has its foundation in ethnology, and no nation can be blamed for it." Now since the Jew is everywhere regarded as a stranger by the native population, we should have no right to grumble if our hosts in the various countries treated us like other strangers who settle permanently among them. But in fact we find that people everywhere dislike Jews much more than other strangers. Why is this? For the same reason—replies Pinsker—for which men behave in different ways to a well-to-do guest and to a penniless beggar. The first comes as an equal; he too has a house in which he gives hospitality—no matter whether we ourselves or others enjoy it—and therefore we recognise it as our duty to give him a welcome, even if we are not altogether delighted with his company; while he on his side is conscious that he has a right to demand such treatment as the conventions of polite society dictate, just as in his own house he extends that treatment to others. Not so the homeless mendicant. He on his side is free from the obligations of hospitality, since he has no opportunity of

countries: that is, have been allowed to take part in social and political life like the other inhabitants. But Pinsker lays the foundation for this view, by demanding—for the first time—*national* equality, and substituting the formula of spiritual nationalism: "the same rights for the Jewish *nation* as for the other *nations*" ("die Gleichstellung der jüdischen Nation mit den anderen Nationen"—*Autoemancipation*, p. 7 [11]) for the older formula of the protagonists of emancipation: "the same rights for Jews as for the other citizens." It is, however, fundamental to Pinsker's view that national equality is unattainable so long as we lack the concrete attributes of nationality. A nation which is a nation only in the spiritual sense is a monstrosity which the other nations cannot possibly regard as their compeer; it follows that they cannot recognise its title to demand the same rights as those enjoyed by the real nations.

fulfilling them. Hence his request for our hospitality is a request for pure charity. It is not the appeal of an equal to the principle of equality of rights and duties ; it is the appeal to compassion of one weaker and humbler than ourselves, who can receive but cannot give. Hence, even if we are so compassionate as to welcome the poor man and treat him with affection and respect, like one of ourselves, the equality is only one of external appearance. In our heart of hearts we feel, and he feels too, that we are doing him a kindness, that we are treating him well out of our goodness of heart, and doing something that we might have forborne doing if not for our charitable and benevolent disposition. This feeling alone suffices to create a wide gulf between us, and to lower his worth in our estimation and his own.

Which picture represents Israel among the nations? Not that of the well-to-do guest ; for Israel has no place of his own where he can fulfil the obligations of hospitality towards other nations. Israel is like the mendicant who goes from door to door, asking others to give him what he does not give to others. And therefore the other nations do not regard the Jew as their equal, and do not recognise any duty to show him that decent behaviour which they practise towards all the other foreigners who live among them. If, then, they are kind enough to make room for him, it is only by an act of charity, which degrades the recipient. When their generosity goes to the furthest extreme, they give the poor visitor the greatest boon that they can give—that of equal rights. But the mere fact that the grant of equal rights is an act of generosity, and not a duty based on the real equality of the two parties, robs the boon of its moral value, and makes it merely a piece of

legislative machinery. The giver can never forget that he is the giver, nor the receiver that he is the receiver. For this reason Jewish emancipation in all countries has been and must always remain political only, not social. The Jew enjoys equal rights as a citizen, but not equality as a man, as one who takes his part in the intimate life of society. The non-Jew and the Jew alike are conscious of this fact, and so, despite his equal rights, the Jew remains an inferior even in his own estimation, and in non-Jewish society he endeavours to hide his Judaism, and is grateful to non-Jews when they do not remind him of his origin, but behave as though it were a matter of indifference to them.

The conclusion is that the Jews can never attain to true social equality in Gentile countries unless they cease to be always recipients and rise to the rank of respectable visitors, who can give to others what they ask for themselves. In other words, the Jews must once more possess themselves of a native land of their own, where they will be masters and hosts. Then their place in the estimation of other nations will improve automatically, and wherever they set foot they will be regarded as equals by the natives, who will consider themselves in duty bound to treat the Jews with the same respect which they show to other strangers who come to stay among them.¹

Besides the two causes explained above, there is a third cause, economic in character, which gives a practical turn to Gentile hatred of the Jew, and brings it into actual operation in the form of physical restriction and persecution.

In the life of civilised nations the struggle for existence

¹ *ib.* pp. 7-10 [11-13.]

assumes the form of peaceful competition. In this sphere every State distinguishes to a certain extent between the native and the stranger, and gives the native preference where there is not room for both. This discrimination is practised even against the honoured stranger, whom the native regards as his equal; and it stands to sense that there will be a vastly greater amount of discrimination against the poor vagrant, whose existence in the State is tolerated only out of kindness and charity. If you have a large house, with room enough and to spare for your family and for respectable visitors, you do not begrudge the beggar his corner, but let him live with you as long as he likes. But when the family grows and the house begins to feel cramped you will at once look askance at the beggar-guests, whom you are under no obligation to respect or to feed. And if you see that they do not squeeze up and make room for you, but, on the contrary, endeavour to get more elbow-room for themselves, regardless of the fact that they are crowding you, then you will resent the impudence with which they forget their place, and in the heat of anger you will turn them out neck and crop, or at least drive them back into their own corner, make it as small as possible and confine them rigidly to it for the future. But the respectable guests will still be treated with deference, and though you may secretly dislike them for occupying valuable room, you will not permit yourself to overstep the limits of politeness and to turn them out into the street, save in exceptional cases where they themselves overstep the mark and your patience gives out.

Thus we find that even where the number of Jews is small, they bring down on themselves the resentment and hatred of their neighbours because of their success in

the struggle for existence, and the advantage which their ability and pertinacity gain for them over their competitors in the various walks of life; and where the Jewish settlement is considerable, anti-Semitism finds its food—even without any success on the Jewish side—in the mere fact of their existence: for their existence is bound, poor and cramped though it be, to lead to competition which their neighbours will feel. In either case the native population does not consider itself obliged to restrain its feelings and behave with perfect politeness to a miserable nation which is allowed to live among the other nations only on sufferance, and is so ungrateful as to jostle its benefactors without shame.¹

This cause also, then, cannot be removed except through the removal of the other causes mentioned before. We must build a house for ourselves, and then, even in foreign countries, we shall have the position of respected guests, and our competition with the native population will not arouse their resentment and jealousy more than the competition of other strangers. But the economic cause differs from the other causes. Our national and political degradation is a moral fact, and requires only a moral remedy—that we stand higher in the estimation of the world, as a nation with a concrete life of its own, and with a land in which it can extend to others that hospitality which it receives elsewhere. But in order to remove the economic cause we must of necessity diminish the competition between Jew and non-Jew in places where that competition is excessive. For even the respected guest has economic freedom only within certain limits. If he oversteps these limits, and his competition presses too hard on the native, the native

¹ *ib.* pp. 10-11 [13-14].

is forced to protect himself, either by legislative restriction of the foreigner's rights, or sometimes even by force. It follows that if we succeed in establishing a separate State for our people, the two first causes of anti-Semitism will be removed, even if the State is very small, and even if most of the Jews remain where they are, and only a very small minority goes to settle in our State. For the mere fact of the existence of a Jewish State, where Jews would be masters, and their national life would develop on lines of its own in accordance with their spirit—this fact alone would suffice to remove from us the brand of inferiority, and to raise us in the world's estimation to the level of a nation equal in worth to the other nations, sharing alike their privileges and their duties; and the attitude of the other nations to us would no longer be different from their attitude to each other. But the economic cause, though its working may be mitigated to some extent when the wandering mendicant is transformed into a well-to-do guest, cannot be got rid of until the number of Jews in every country declines to the limit dictated by the economic condition of the native population. Until that time hatred of these foreign competitors will continue, and the native population will continue to persecute them with restrictive laws and even with violence, even though there exist somewhere or other a separate Jewish State, and even though all nations respect the Jewish nationality which has in that State its concrete expression.

Thus we arrive at a further condition of the solution of our problem. What we need is not simply a State, but a State to which the majority of the Jews will emigrate from all their present homes—to such an extent that their numbers in every country will decline to the extent

demanding by local conditions—and a State extensive enough and materially rich enough to maintain so large a population.

And here we come to the Achilles' heel of political Zionism. Granted that we have it in our power to establish a Jewish State: have we it in our power to diminish thereby the number of Jews in every country to the maximum which the economic condition of the country can bear without their arousing anti-Semitism? This question the opponents of the new Zionism, which promises *to put an end to the Jewish problem* by the establishment of the State, are continually asking: but so far we have not received from the Zionists a clear and satisfactory answer. During the last twenty years, for instance, at least a million Jews have left Eastern Europe for America and Africa. That is a very large number, sufficient for the establishment of a Jewish State. Yet this emigration has had no perceptible effect on the economic condition of the countries from which it has taken place, and the relations between the native population and the Jews in those countries have not improved. The reason is that the emigration has not in fact lessened the number of Jews in those countries, the loss being always counterbalanced by the natural increase of those who remain. If, then, Pinsker's idea had been carried out as soon as his pamphlet was published, and all these emigrants had gone not to America or Africa, but to the Jewish State, the State might by now have been successful and flourishing, and national life might be developing there in a satisfactory manner, so as to bring great honour to our people wherever Jews are; but none the less the Jewish problem in the lands whence the emigration proceeded

would remain exactly where it was, because economic competition between the Jews and the native population would be just as keen as before, and would still be felt by the latter to an intolerable degree. If, therefore, a Jewish State is really to solve the Jewish problem on its economic side for good and all, then hundreds of thousands must emigrate to it every year from the lands of the Diaspora, so that the diminution in the number of Jews in those lands will be patently perceptible, and their influence on economic life will decrease from year to year, till it ceases to be a cause of hatred and jealousy on the part of the native population. We must therefore ask ourselves first of all, whether it is really possible to transport such a vast number of people in a short time, and to open up for them new sources of livelihood in a new State, wherever it may be. I doubt very much whether any responsible person will answer this question in the affirmative.

But this criticism, which is fatal to the new Zionism, as expounded by Herzl and his followers, does not seriously affect Pinsker's Zionism. The new Zionists make the political and economic problem the be-all and end-all of their strivings. Their primary aim is to improve the hard lot of the Jews *as individuals*. They regard such improvement in exile as out of the question, since Jews are regarded as strangers in every country, and the competition of the stranger exposes him to the resentment of the native population. Hence they demand that the Jews shall establish a separate State for themselves, where they will not be strangers and their competition will not be a crime.¹ But this idea can be justified only if the State is able to improve the lot of all the Jews or most

¹ *Judenstaat*, pp. 24-26.

of them ; that is, if all or most of the Jews can leave foreign countries and settle in their State. Unless this condition is fulfilled, the amelioration will be only partial ; it will affect only that fortunate minority which succeeds in establishing itself in the Jewish State. The majority will remain as badly off as before—hated and persecuted foreigners in strange lands. Where, then, is the promised annihilation of the Jewish problem through the establishment of the State ?

But with Pinsker it is different. The loss which he mourns is primarily the loss of Jewish national dignity. He weeps for a *nation* which is not regarded and respected by the other nations as an equal, and whose individual members are treated everywhere not merely as foreigners, but as beggars in receipt of charity. With him the question of national dignity comes first of all. Of the three causes to which he traces the ill-feeling between Jews and Gentiles, the first one, which lies in the degraded position of the Jews as a nation—a point not mentioned by the new Zionists—is the most important in his own view, and occupies most of his attention. Next to it stands the political cause ; and this cause also, unlike the new Zionists, he regards from the point of view of the problem of national dignity. He is not much troubled by the fact that we are treated as aliens in every country : that fact, no doubt, harms us as individuals, but in itself it does not imply any contempt or inferiority. The root of the trouble is that we are not treated as aliens in the ordinary political sense, but are regarded as wandering mendicants, as inferior beings, who are not entitled to demand respect and consideration as of right. So with the third cause, the economic one. Its sting lies for Pinsker chiefly in the fact that here also

we Jews are differentiated from other aliens—that in consequence of the low esteem in which we are held our competition causes more resentment than that of other aliens. Pinsker, therefore, has more right than the new Zionists to regard the establishment of a Jewish State as the absolute solution of the Jewish problem—that is, of the problem of the *dignity* of the Jewish nation and of its members, who, even if most of them remain scattered among the nations, and even if they continue to be hated and persecuted in various countries because of their economic competition, will at any rate no longer be exposed to the contempt of their neighbours, and to the taunt that they are not a nation, but a pack of beggars wandering about in a world which is not theirs, and existing only on sufferance.

On the other hand, Pinsker raises another question, which does not trouble the new Zionists very much : the question of the national consciousness.

If we assume, as Herzl does in his pamphlet, that the Jewish State will contain all the Jews, and will offer to every individual Jew the possibility of living comfortably among his people, then we need not be much concerned about the anterior development of the national consciousness as an incentive to the establishment of the State. We have ready to hand another and a stronger incentive in the natural desire of every individual to improve his position.¹ But if from the outset we accept the fact that even a Jewish State will not absolutely solve the Jewish problem on its economic side, and that the chief purpose for which we need a State is a moral one—to gain for

¹ The question, "What will induce the Jews to found their State and to settle in it?" is answered by Herzl quite simply: "We can trust the anti-Semites to see to that." (*Judenstaat*, p. 59.)

our own nation the respect of other nations, and to create a healthy body for our national spirit—then we are bound to face the question whether the national consciousness is so strong among us, and the honour of our nation so dear to us, that this motive alone, unalloyed by any consideration of individual advantage, will be sufficient to spur us on to so vast and difficult a task.

Now Pinsker, candid here as always, does not conceal from us that, as things are, the national consciousness among us is not nearly strong enough for our purpose. "Our greatest misfortune is that we do not form a nation : we are merely Jews." The *galuth* life has compelled every Jew to put all his strength into his individual struggle for existence ; and in that struggle we have been compelled to use any kind of weapon that came to hand, without enquiring too closely whether it was consistent with our national dignity. Thus, as time went on, both our sense of nationality and our sense of dignity became dulled ; and at last we ceased to feel the need of restoring our dignity, national or individual.¹ We left it to the Deity to perform that ideal task by bringing us the Messiah at the proper time, and buried ourselves in affairs more necessary for our immediate physical survival.² Even in modern times, when the breeze of modern culture has blown on us and begun to awaken our dormant sense of dignity, we try to find satisfaction in a strange delusion of our own invention—that the people of Israel has a "mission," for the sake of which it must remain scattered among the nations : "a mission in which nobody believes, a privilege of which, candidly, we should be glad to be rid, if at that price we could wipe

¹ *Autoemancipation*, p. 12 [15].

² *ib.* p. 16 [18].

out the name of 'Jew' as a title of shame."¹ This loss of self-respect on the one side aggravates the contempt in which we are held, and on the other side is itself the greatest stumbling-block on our path of progress. For what, except a strong national consciousness, can induce our people to bend all its energies to the task of restoring its national dignity, and to fight unceasingly and unwearyingly against all the obstacles with which it is confronted? That those obstacles are many and serious—this again Pinsker does not conceal from us. At the best, several generations must elapse before we can attain our end, "perhaps only after labour too great for human strength." Only, as we recognise that this is the one road to our national salvation, we must not turn back faint-heartedly because of the danger or for lack of confidence in the success of our efforts." But such language is intelligible only to a thoroughly awakened national consciousness, which can intensify the desire to attain the end in proportion to the heaviness of the task, can flame up for one instant in the heart of the whole people, and produce a "national resolution," a sacred and unbending resolve to take up the work of revival and to carry it on, generation after generation, till its completion. And "where," asks Pinsker, bitterly, "where shall we find this national consciousness?"

¹ *ib.* p. 19 [20]. As the sequel shows, Pinsker's criticism is aimed only at those who make the "mission" the moral end of our dispersion. They think that we can fulfil our mission only if we are thoroughly scattered: whereas the fact is precisely the reverse. "So far the world does not regard us as a genuine firm, and allows us little credit." If, therefore, we really wish to benefit the world by fulfilling a mission, we must first of all establish our national position, so as to enhance our credit with the rest of the world.

² *ib.* p. 20 [21].

Pinsker found no satisfactory answer to this question. He made this national consciousness a categorical imperative, a *conditio sine qua non*; but he did not show how it was to be supplied. For this reason the whole of the practical scheme which follows gives one the impression of being formulated conditionally—subject, that is, to the emergence among our people, no matter by what means, of a national consciousness strong enough to enable them to carry out the idea in practice.

Pinsker's practical scheme, as I said above, is only an outline. But its general lines are very similar to those laid down by Herzl in the pamphlet which is the basis of present-day Zionist policy.

As we cannot hope for another leader like Moses—"history does not vouchsafe such leaders to the same people repeatedly"—the leadership of the movement for national rebirth must be taken by a group of distinguished Jews, men of strong will and generous character, who "by their union will, perhaps, succeed in freeing us from reproach and persecution, no less than did the one great leader."¹ Herzl uses very similar language about this collective *negotiorum gestor*,² and he and Pinsker alike look for its members among the upper-class Jews; but Herzl has his eye especially on the Jews of England, while Pinsker looks generally to the great organisations already in existence.³ Herzl calls this governing body "the Society of Jews"; Pinsker calls it "the Directorium." Herzl pictures the formation of the Society of Jews in a very simple manner. The best

¹ *ib.* p. 26 [25].

² *Judenstaat*, p. 70.

³ He means, apparently, the *Alliance Israélite Universelle* and its sister organisations in England and Austria. The Jewish Colonisation Association had not yet come into existence.

of the English Jews, having approved the project, come together without any preliminaries, and form a "Society of Jews." Herzl sees no need to call a National Assembly first: the general consent which is necessary to give the Society proper standing with the Governments will come afterwards spontaneously.¹ But Pinsker wanted the various organisations to call "*a National Congress*, of which they themselves would be the nucleus." Only in the event of their refusing to do this does he suggest that they should at least constitute a special "national institution" called a "Directorium," which should unite all forces in the national work. The principal and immediate object of this institution would be "to create a safe and independent home of refuge for that superfluity of poor Jews which exists as a proletariat in various countries, and is disliked by the native population."² All other Jews, not merely in the West, "where they are already naturalised up to a certain point," but also "in those places where they are not readily tolerated," can remain where they are. Unlike Herzl, Pinsker does not think it possible that all the Jews will leave their homes and go to their own State; nor is this necessary for his real object, as I have pointed out above. Economic pressure is under present conditions causing the "superfluity" to emigrate year by year from every country where there is a superfluity; and thousands of Jews leave their homes because they can no longer maintain themselves. At present these emigrants escape one trouble

¹ Herzl shows, in his pamphlet, no great liking for large meetings, even for propaganda purposes. "There is no need"—so writes the founder of the Zionist Congress—"to summon special meetings with a lot of palaver." (*ib.* p. 57.)

² *Autoem.* p. 27 [25-26]. Elsewhere (p. 34 [30]) Pinsker insists that the home of refuge must be secured by *political* means ("politisch gesichert.")

to fall into another. They wander from country to country, and find no proper resting-place ; and the large sums of money expended by various organisations on the migration of Jews and their settlement in new homes produce no real benefit, because the new home also is only a temporary lodging. When the number of Jews in the new country reaches the "saturation-point," the journey will have to be resumed ; the Jews must move on to yet other countries. But if we can prepare, while there is yet time, a single secure home of refuge instead of the many insecure ones, the superfluity will gradually find its way thither, and its inhabitants will increase from year to year, till at last it becomes the centre of our national life, though the bulk of the people will remain, as hitherto, scattered in strange lands.

The first act of the "Directorium" would be to send an expedition of experts to investigate and find the territory best suited to our purpose from every point of view. When he wrote his pamphlet Pinsker did not yet regard our historic land as the only possible home of refuge ; on the contrary, he feared that our ingrained love for Palestine might give us a bias and induce us to choose that country without paying regard to its political, economic and other conditions, which perhaps might be unfavourable. For this reason he warns us emphatically not to be guided by sentiment in this matter, but to leave the question of territory to a commission of experts, who will solve it after a thorough and detailed investigation. But on the whole he thinks that the desired territory will be found either in America or in Turkey.¹ In the

¹ Herzl also, in his pamphlet, does not decide on a territory ; but he also looks to America and Turkey, and suggests the Argentine or Palestine (*Judenstaat*, p. 29).

latter alternative we shall form a special "Pashalik," the independence of which will be guaranteed by Turkey and the other Great Powers. "It will be one of the principal functions of the Directorium," writes Pinsker, for all the world like an orthodox adherent of "diplomatic" Zionism to-day, "to win for this project the sympathy of the Porte and the other European Governments."¹

"And then, but not till then," he warns us once again, the Directorium will enter on its work of buying land and organising colonisation. In this work it will need the assistance of "a group of capitalists," who will form "a joint-stock company"—exactly as in Herzl's scheme, where side by side with the Society of Jews there is established the Jewish Company, a company of capitalists, to direct the material affairs of the settlement.

Pinsker next proceeds to describe in outline the progress of the new settlement—how the land will be parcelled out in small plots, some to be sold to men with capital, and some to be occupied by men of no means with the assistance of a *National Fund* established to that end; and so forth. But for our present purpose we need follow him no further. What has been said above will suffice to make it plain to all who wish to see that it was Pinsker who worked out the whole theory of political Zionism, and that his successors, so far from adding anything essential to his scheme, actually took away in large measure its ideal basis, and thus so seriously impaired its moral value that they had to have recourse to various promises which they could neither fulfil nor repudiate. This will become abundantly clear to anybody who

¹ *Autoem.* p. 30 [28].

will compare the two pamphlets, Pinsker's and Herzl's.

Pinsker, as we have seen, puts the emphasis on the moral aspect, Herzl on the material. Hence Pinsker wishes to found only a national centre, Herzl promises a complete "ingathering of the exiles"; Pinsker finds the motive power in a strong national consciousness, Herzl in the desire for individual betterment. For this reason Pinsker does not find it necessary to minimise the difficulties: on the contrary, he repeats many times, with emphasis, that only at the cost of infinite sacrifice will the goal perhaps—mark that "perhaps"!—be reached. Similarly, he recognises that it is not work for one generation alone. "We have to take only the first step; our successors must follow in our footsteps, with measured tread and without undue haste."¹ Not so Herzl. He is bound to make light of the difficulties, because otherwise he would have to face the question: "If we are looking for betterment as individuals, how can we waste so much energy on a task that will take generations to accomplish, and may not be accomplished at all, when we have so many pressing needs which can be more or less met if we devote that energy to them?" Hence Herzl is never tired of promising that it will be very easy to carry out his project in a short time, if only we want it. "Let us but begin, and anti-Semitism will at once die down in every country: for this will be our treaty of peace with it. Once let the Jewish Company be established, and the news of it will spread in one day to the ends of the earth, and our position will immediately begin to improve. . . . Thus the work will proceed, rapidly yet

¹ *ib.* p. 35 [31].

without convulsion.”¹ The same difference is evident in the general scheme of the two pamphlets. Pinsker devotes most of his pamphlet to showing how low we have sunk as a nation, and how badly we need a State of our own to save our dignity. Only at the end does he explain briefly how he pictures to himself the practical realisation of his idea. This is because from his point of view the essential thing is that we resolve that our dignity absolutely demands this course of action, cost what it may. We have no need to spend much thought at the outset on the question whether we shall succeed, or how and when we shall succeed, because, if we suppose that the task is beyond our strength, we must none the less take it up, in order to wipe out our reproach. The question of dignity brooks no calculation. But Herzl deals very briefly with fundamental principles and reasons, because, from his materialistic point of view, there is really no need to enlarge on them. Can anybody doubt that the position of the Jews in exile is very bad, and that it would be better for them and for their neighbours if they went and established a separate State for themselves? Even our “assimilationists” would certainly agree for the most part, if they only knew with absolute certainty from the start that the project could be carried out without too much trouble, “rapidly yet without convulsion.” The root question is, then, whether the goal can in fact be reached under such comfortable conditions. For this reason Herzl gives most of his

¹ “Eilig und doch ohne Erschütterung” (*Judenstaat*, p. 85). In one place Herzl says that the emigration of the whole people from the various countries to its own State will take “some decades” (p. 27), but does not say how many. Elsewhere he is more definite; the emigration will last “perhaps twenty years or perhaps more” (p. 79).

attention to this question, and explains his practical scheme in minute detail, with the object of showing that it demands no great sacrifices, whether material or spiritual, and that everything from A to Z will be achieved with ease, rapidity and universal satisfaction. All the emigration to the Jewish State, up to the time when the whole people is gathered there, he describes almost as though it were a holiday excursion. And in the State itself everybody lives in comfort and prosperity. Nobody will need to forgo even the minor habits of his ordinary life; and the immigrant will not even have to miss his friends and relations, because the Jews will leave the different countries in "local groups," and will be settled in their own land on that basis, so that each man can attach himself to the group which is closest to him geographically and spiritually. The working-classes, on whose strength the State will be built up, will work only seven hours a day, and even the Jewish Company, which is to direct the whole work with its capital, will not incur any financial risk, because its investments will be sound and will produce an exceptionally good return.¹

If, further, we take into account the wide difference between the two pamphlets in style, we may see that Herzl's pamphlet has the air of being a translation of Pinsker's from the language of the ancient Prophets into that of modern journalism.

Yet the name of Pinsker, as the originator of the

¹ It is worth pointing out that Pinsker, too, hints that the company of capitalists, which is to co-operate with his Directorium, may expect a good profit. But as soon as he has mentioned this expectation he adds: "Whether, however, this act of national redemption will be more or less good business or not—that question is not of great moment in comparison with the importance of the undertaking for the future of our people." (pp. 32-33 [30].)

political Zionist theory, is almost forgotten. He is mentioned as a rule only in connection with the work of "petty colonisation" in Palestine, as though his horizon had been bounded by his activity in that sphere. Ordinary men, for whom the real is the visible, remember only things that are done: and the thing that Pinsker did—that to which he devoted all his subsequent work—has really no direct relation to the message which he began by enunciating.

I have shown elsewhere how it was that Pinsker came to take part in the work of the *Chovevé Zion*, despite the political character of his theory. He understood perfectly well that their work was very far removed from the great project of which he dreamt; but he understood also that without a "national resolution," proceeding from a strong national consciousness, and without unity and an organisation embracing the whole people, it would be impossible to carry out his great idea. The consent of the Powers, the favour of the Sublime Porte, even a Charter signed and sealed—all this cannot help us in the least, so long as we are not a single people, strong by virtue of our unity and our indomitable will, penetrated through and through with a sense of our present national degradation, and prepared to sacrifice our all for a nobler future. Hence, when Pinsker saw that national indifference was the rule in every section of the people; when he saw how faint an echo his pamphlet raised in the hearts of the ruling classes, whom he confidently expected to be the first to rally to his banner; and when he saw a small group of men with insignificant means, or none, putting forth every possible effort to carry out a national project, small and poor though it was in comparison

with his own ideal—Pinsker could not help lending a hand to those who were engaged in this work, seeing in them the nucleus of an organisation, and the small beginning of the “national resolution.” For Pinsker the work done in Palestine was not the beginning of the practical realisation of his programme, but only the beginning of the preparatory stage—the beginning of the revival of the national consciousness, and of the union of the people under the banner of a common ideal. He hoped by means of national action on a small scale to arrive ultimately at that national resolution on the part of the whole people for which he looked in his pamphlet; and then the real work would begin.

It is abundantly clear that this is exactly the course which the new Zionists too are taking to-day, though as yet, it would appear, unconsciously. How great, for instance, is the gulf between the Jewish Company of Herzl’s vision—possessing a capital of fifty millions sterling, and undertaking not only to plant the settlers in the Jewish State, but also to sell the property and transact the business of all the Jews in the Diaspora—and the small Bank, with its quarter-of-a-million, which has now been opened, after infinite labour, to carry on some simple and unimportant business operations in Palestine and Russia! Or again, is there any sort of relationship between the Society of Jews which Herzl describes in his pamphlet—a Society which is to stand at the head of the whole people and manage all its national affairs, as Moses did—and the Actions Committee which now stands at the head of the Zionist organisation? And how shall we be brought to the Jewish State—that free State guaranteed by all the Powers—by such minor concessions as it is possible to

obtain now, according to the Zionist leaders, at Yildiz Kiosk for a certain price? The plain truth is that all this work, which the new Zionists regard as “political” work *par excellence*, has as little to do with the theory of political Zionism as had the petty colonisation work which Pinsker took up. In the one case as in the other, the whole value of the work lies in its effect on the people, which it educates gradually in the direction of unity, organisation, national resolution. In other words, we are still, as we were in Pinsker’s day, at the first stage, the preliminary stage of preparatory work.

It must be admitted, however, that in the practical sphere—even confining that to preparatory work and propaganda—Pinsker did little, and did not achieve in his ten years of work half as much as the leader of the new Zionism has achieved in five years. Pinsker was purely a theorist: he worked out the theory of Zionism better and more fully than his successor, but, like all theorists, he was of little use when it came to practical work. Men of his type, simple-souled and pure-minded to a degree, innocent of the tricks and wiles of diplomacy, knowing nothing but the naked truth—such men cannot find the way to popular favour. Their words are too sincere, their actions too straightforward. Those only can attract the mob and bend it to their will who can descend to its level, pander to its tastes, and pipe to it in a hundred tunes, choosing the right one at the right moment. Pinsker had none of these arts. If, for example, he had gone to Yildiz Kiosk to negotiate for the colonisation of Palestine, and had been told there: “If you have two million pounds you may have so-and-so; otherwise—nothing”—what would he have done? Without a doubt he would have replied at once:

“ We have not such a large sum of money, and have at present no prospect of getting it.” Then he would have returned home empty-handed, and the public at large would have known nothing of his going or of his returning; or, if it had been impossible to keep the matter quiet, everybody would have known that “certain steps had been taken” at Yildiz, but had come to nothing. This, of course, would have made a bad impression, and have helped in some degree to weaken the energy of his few supporters. But we all still remember how the Zionist leaders behaved on a similar occasion last year. Leadership on these lines cannot satisfy those who have a liking for the plain truth; but from a pragmatic point of view it undoubtedly has the advantage. First of all, people heard only the glad news (it “spread in one day to the ends of the earth”) that the Sultan had given the Zionist leaders a favourable reception and made them certain promises, but that the details could not yet be published. This news aroused widespread attention: friends and foes alike waited breathlessly for the curtain to be drawn. Then, after the news had become public property and enlivened the hopes of the Zionists, the leaders made the further announcement that the great promises had been made conditionally, and could not be fulfilled unless they had two million pounds. Everybody who knew the true state of things understood at once—and certainly the leaders understood it, even while they were having audience of the Sultan—that this condition could not be met, so that the promises were mere empty words. And yet the first impression was not altogether effaced, and it served to strengthen in many people the belief that something great could be done if only all

sections of the people were ready to put all their strength into it—the kind of belief which is calculated to intensify the energy of the workers, and to spur them on to put forth greater efforts.

In a word : theory and practice are two departments which no doubt depend on each other, but each one needs special abilities and different qualities of mind, which can with difficulty be combined in one man. We must therefore honour every man according to his value in his own department. If I might borrow an illustration from religion, I should say that Pinsker was the originator of the gospel of political Zionism, and Herzl its apostle ; Pinsker brought the new dispensation, and Herzl gave it currency. But it is usual for the apostle to recognise the originator and to acknowledge his greatness : as he spreads the gospel, so he publishes abroad and sanctifies the name of him who brought it. Had the Zionist apostle followed this custom, Pinsker would now have a world-wide reputation, and would be venerated by all whose watchword is Zion. But Herzl would not be satisfied with the practical mission which was in reality his *métier*. He must needs “originate” the gospel itself over again—in an inferior form, it is true—so that it should be all his. Thus the odd result has come about that the further the gospel spreads, the more completely is its true originator forgotten.

But it is not for Pinsker’s reputation that I am concerned. In his lifetime he was so far from the desire for notoriety and ascendancy, that I have no doubt that if he were alive to-day, he would rejoice wholeheartedly at the wide vogue given to his idea, and not a shade of displeasure would pass over his face because

of the injustice done to himself personally. My only regret is that Pinsker's wonderful pamphlet has sunk with him, and the Zionist gospel itself has become more superficial and more materialistic.¹ Zionism is a faith, and, like every other faith, it needs one authoritative "Bible," to be conned by the true believers, to be their fountain-head of spiritual influence. At present Zionism has no "Bible." Great as is Herzl's influence with the new Zionists, his pamphlet could not attain that high dignity. But its general spirit pervades all the other brochures and speeches on which Zionists live, and from which they derive their faith; and that spirit, as we have seen, is not calculated to raise the masses above material interests, and render them capable of making great sacrifices for a higher national ideal. Pinsker's pamphlet is the only one that is worthy to take the first place in the literature of Zionism, and to be revered by the party as the *fons et origo* of all its views and policies. If this pamphlet were disseminated among Zionists, and made familiar to them, it would undoubtedly help to educate them in its spirit—a spirit of pure idealism, which sets more store by the dignity of the whole people than by the advantage of the individual, never flinches in the face of danger, is never impatient, and demands no certainty of success. Then the leaders would not have to be always looking for some means of keeping the fervour up to the required temperature, nor to entangle themselves in exaggerated promises

¹ Even in his lifetime Pinsker was not understood, and his pamphlet was not appreciated at its full value. Smolenskin, in his critique, saw nothing in the pamphlet beyond the superficial *Chibbath Zion* which had then a wide vogue in Hebrew literature, and could find nothing to say in its praise except that it was written in German—a language in which "such ideas . . . have never been expressed before."

and self-contradictions, which only the blindness of enthusiasm can fail for a moment to detect.

Enthusiasm, however, is a flame which spreads rapidly but does not last. It is only the slow-burning fire, with its steady flame, that can create the enormous strength required for such a national task in many successive generations. For this reason I believe that there will yet come a day when all the external show and parade will no longer satisfy those who thirst for a national ideal; and in that day many will once more remember Pinsker and his pure and lofty message—a message of work without limit and sacrifice without reward, for no other object than to restore the dignity of our people, and to enhance our value for humanity.

THE TIME HAS COME

(1906¹)

You are right, my friends: "Now the time has come to begin planting our literature in the land of its birth and on its own native soil."² But it seems to me that there is a wider and a deeper foundation for this statement than you give to it in your announcement. The time is ripe for your enterprise not merely "because there is already a considerable number of Jews in Palestine and the neighbouring countries, and so Hebrew literature, its language being common to the Jews of Palestine, has a function to perform in the sphere of national culture."² If that were the only reason, we Hebrew writers outside Palestine, though we should certainly have welcomed the new adventure and have been glad to enjoy the literary fruit of Palestine, should not have felt it our duty to take an active part in a local Palestinian literary movement, created only for the Jews in Palestine, whose circumstances are known to us only by hearsay, or from the visitor's brief experience. If none the less I feel—and I am sure that other writers will feel the same—that it is my duty to take part in your undertaking, that can only be because it is not merely the condition of the Jews in Palestine, but the condition of our people in general that now convinces us of the necessity of reuniting our land and our language—those sundered halves of a single whole, those twin main pillars of our national life, which are both so near to us and so far

¹ [A letter to the editors of *Ha-Omer*, a Hebrew miscellany which began to appear in 1907—the first of its kind in Palestine.]

² [From the preliminary announcement of *Ha-Omer*.]

from us—and of making them both together, by the establishment of a worthy literary centre in the land, a single mighty channel through which the influence of our national spirit should be carried to all the lands of our dispersion.

“*Now* convinces us,” I say: although it is already many years since we began to recognise that the Hebrew spirit is yearning towards its own land, because its life in exile is not a healthy and a complete life. But this recognition itself could not get free all at once from the fetters of *galuth*, and did not prevent us from dreaming all those years of the revival of our language and literature outside Palestine. Now realities have shown the futility of our dream, and we learn perforce from experience what we would not learn willingly from logic, that just as the Hebrew spirit cannot develop as it should without a free centre “on its own native soil,” so, too, are its outer vestments, our language and literature, under the same disability; and all our efforts to revive them on strange soil will not avail except for a short time—until the hammer of an alien environment strikes out a spark which will destroy in a moment what we have spent many years and the last remnant of our strength in building up.¹

How slow is the development of an idea in the human mind! Every new idea is born with great travail, and even after its birth there is a long lapse of time and a heavy loss of force between its dawn and its noontide splendour. At first it appears shrouded in mist, luminous yet obscure, and its faint rays shimmer on the

¹ This Essay was written at the end of the period of the movement for freedom in Russia, which attracted almost all the educated Russian Jews, with the result that our national work and Hebrew literature were greatly impoverished. [Footnote added in 1913.]

surface of the human spirit without being able to penetrate to the depths below. Only little by little, after much labour and hard struggling, is the mist dispelled, and the light of the idea grows stronger and floods all the dark corners of the mind. Then we look into these corners, and wonder at ourselves for not having been conscious before of the chaos of error and contradiction which held its own there while the light was already playing on the surface above.

Hard were the birth-pangs of our national idea in the form of "Zionism," and the mists shrouded it at its birth. In the last generation the Jewish people had settled down to its exile; it waited for the mercy of Heaven and the kindness of the world, scarcely felt how its limbs were being torn asunder and scattered in all directions, and asked no great boon of the future, except a peaceful life and a livelihood among the nations. Then a hurricane arose, and thunderously swept away the hope of kindness from the world, yes, and even the hope of mercy from heaven. And the clarion-call went forth among the exiled people: You wish for a peaceful life and livelihood? Then get you up and go to your national land, and look no more for crumbs from strangers' tables: for there is neither peace nor livelihood except for each people in its own land.

That was the dawn of our new idea. The memory of our historic land, which had become a lifeless thing, a mere book-memory, became once more a living emotional force, and in its re-birth awoke our love for the rest of our heritage, which now appeared in a new light to many for whom it had lost all actual value. If we say—so these men reasoned—that we have a national

land, to which we wish to return in very deed and not only in prayer, then we admit, and want others to admit, that we are actually a nation, and not merely a Church. And if we are a nation, then we must have a national spirit, which distinguishes us from other nations, and we must value and protect it as every other nation does with its national spirit. And if we value our national spirit, where shall we find it if not in the heritage of our past, and especially in our national language and literature, in which each generation stored up its spiritual treasure, and left to its heirs in the next the best fruits of its thought, its secret longings, its half-uttered sighs? Thus *Chibbath Zion* began by giving an impulse to the "spiritual revival"—the fostering of our language and literature, the establishment of national schools, and so forth—not as a separate and distinct ideal, but as a necessary consequence of the ideal of a peaceful life in Palestine, as a sort of proof of our being really a distinct nation and possessing all the attributes of a nation, and being therefore both in need and deserving of that which we have not now—our national land.

But gradually the Zionist idea began to get clearer, and events in Palestine and elsewhere helped it to emerge from the mists of visionary hopes. Then some of its followers reversed the sequence of ideas. It is not the case, they said, that the redemption of the people is the goal of all our efforts, and the spiritual revival only a means to it, and a branch of it. On the contrary, the spiritual revival is our real object, whether we know it or not, and the whole purpose of the settlement to be built up in Palestine is merely to serve as its basis.

It is true—such was the train of reasoning of this

dissident section—that *galuth* is a very evil thing, and that the only way to escape the ills which are inevitably bound up with it is to escape from *galuth* itself. But this truth of itself tells us nothing, if we cannot at the same time discover the way to “the only way.” To say to a poor man : “ If you want always to be sure of a meal, get rid of your poverty and become rich ! ” or to a sick man : “ If you want to be free of your pains, get up from your bed and be well ! ”—to say this is to say nothing, unless at the same time you show the poor man how to get rich, and the sick man how to get well. Now Zionism has not shown us how to get out of *galuth*. For all the sophistication in the world cannot do away with the cruelty of hard facts, which do not allow us to picture to ourselves, even approximately and in a general way, how our work in Palestine, even if in time it develops up to the very maximum of what is possible, and covers the whole land with gardens and orchards and factories, can accomplish this unprecedented miracle : that so small a country as ours should absorb hundreds of thousands of immigrants at a time, year by year, without coming to such a crisis as would drive out its old and its new inhabitants in even greater numbers. But if this miracle does not happen, and the Palestinian settlement develops only little by little, concurrently with the development of the country’s economic resources, then it is impossible to deny that its gradual expansion will not diminish the number of Jews in other countries (since their natural increase will offset the exodus to Palestine), and will not put an end to their wandering and scattering to all the corners of the globe under economic and social pressure, which is brought to bear on them from time to time in every country in

which they become too numerous. In other words: the hope for an "ingathering of the exiles" has no basis in reality; and even in that distant future to which we look forward, when the Palestinian settlement will have reached its full development, and the Jews there will grow and multiply and fill all the land and make it their own by their work—even then the majority of Jews will be scattered in strange lands, and their life in those lands will even then depend on the good-will of the peoples among whom they live as a small minority, and the dominant peoples will even then look askance at the growth of this "alien body" in their midst if it dares to rise above a certain level: and finally *galuth* in the physical sense will still be with us, and only a part of the people will have escaped from it—that comparatively small part which will have had the good fortune to rebuild the waste places of our land and to attain national freedom there, while all the rest of the people, scattered in strange countries, will remain as to its external condition just as it is, and no fleet will set sail from Palestine to protect it from persecution.

But if this is so, have we a right to regard the rebuilding of Palestine as an ideal for the whole nation, and its success as vital to the hopes of the whole nation?

We have! For *galuth* is twofold—it is material and spiritual. On the one hand it cramps the individual Jew in his material life, by taking from him the possibility of carrying on his struggle for existence, with all his strength and in complete freedom, like any other man; and on the other hand it cramps no less our people as a whole in its spiritual life, by taking from it the possibility of safeguarding and developing its national individuality according to its own spirit, in complete

freedom, like any other people. This spiritual cramping, which our ancestors used to call, in their own fashion, "the exile of the Divine Presence," and for which they shed not less tears than for the exile of the people, has become especially painful in our time, since the overthrow of the artificial wall behind which the spirit of our people entrenched itself in past generations, in order to be able to live its own life; and now we and our national life are enslaved to the spirit of the peoples around us, and we can no longer save our national individuality from being undermined as a consequence of the necessity of assimilating ourselves to the spirit of the alien life, which is too strong for us. Now it is this problem of spiritual *galuth* which really finds its solution in the establishment of a national "refuge" in Palestine: a refuge not for all Jews who need peace and bread, but for the spirit of the people, for that distinctive cultural form, the result of a historical development of thousands of years, which is still strong enough to live and to develop naturally in the future, if only the fetters of *galuth* are removed. And though the refuge contain only a tenth part of the people, this tenth part will be sacred to the whole people, which will see in it a picture of its national individuality, of what it is like when it lives its own life, without external constraint. And who can estimate in advance the strength of the influence which this national centre will exert on all the circumference, and the radical changes which that influence will produce in the life of the whole people?

Some of the *Chovevé Zion* arrived at this idea, as I have said, some eighteen years ago.¹ Had they suc-

¹ [i.e., in 1889.]

ceeded in making it common property, it might have saved both the people and the land from many mistakes. But ideas do not develop quickly in the human mind, and this idea, like others, met with formidable obstacles, which did not allow it to penetrate fully into men's minds. When this opinion of a minority was made public, a shudder went through the Zionist camp, as though the presence of a destructive enemy had been detected. Nor was this instinct wholly mistaken. The movement was then only just beginning to spread among the masses, and here was an attempt to give it a form which must alienate the masses, who want above all things an escape from their material troubles! It is possible that men did occasionally say to themselves: "What does it matter? Those few who can really find a quiet life and a livelihood in Palestine at the present time—will they refuse to go there unless they are assured beforehand that they are bringing complete redemption to the whole people? And the men who work for the ideal—they are of course bound to get quite clear in their own minds about the real purpose of their work, with due regard to actualities, so that they may set about their task in the way best suited to achieve their purpose." It may be that people occasionally indulged in such reflections in secret. But we live in the age of democracy, and everybody believes that only the masses are the source of light and of progress, and that any ideal which the masses cannot grasp is mere nonsense. While it is true that in those days the democratic character of Zionism was not proclaimed from every house-top, as it is to-day, yet even the early *Chovevé Zion* were unconsciously democrats in this sense, that they regarded the masses not merely as material for the

national building, but as conscious architects, deliberately intent on making such a building as the national purpose required. Hence they were scared by the idea that their propaganda would not go down with the masses if they put forward the spiritual revival as their only object; and they went on telling the masses that redemption was at hand if only they would give their whole-hearted support. But in spite of all this they did not succeed in creating a real mass-movement, because the masses not only heard what they said, but also saw what they achieved—and what they achieved was not calculated to confirm the belief that this was the way to redemption. It was only when western Zionism came and proclaimed that it had found a new and “practical” way to achieve the object—the way of diplomacy in the courts of East and West—that the masses followed its flag for a short time, believing in their simplicity that diplomatic documents would be the “paper bridge”¹ over which they would soon pass to the land of their fathers—and then an end to *galuth* and its miseries. But when the hopes of diplomacy were disappointed, the masses once more lost faith in the possibility of escape from *galuth*; and when at the same time they saw a slight chance of an improvement of their condition in the land of their exile in a not distant future, they turned in that direction. So the masses are deserting the Zionist flag before our eyes, and—what is still more painful—they sometimes take the Zionist flag with them and tack it on to the flag of another camp.

When the history of Zionism comes to be written, the historian will not be able to pass in silence over an

¹ [An allusion to an old Jewish legend.]

extraordinary inconsistency of contemporary Zionist propagandists and writers. When they are trying to attract the people to their flag, they wax enthusiastic over the lofty mission of Zionism, which is to end our exile and to deliver the Jews from all their troubles; and at the same time they gird or scoff at the "spiritual" Zionists, whose unfeeling hearts soar skywards while their brethren are afflicted and their blood is shed like water—and so forth, and so forth. But these same men, when they confront the opponents of Zionism, who ask to be told clearly how Zionism can end our exile if it cannot gather all our scattered hosts into Palestine—then they take refuge in the spiritual mission of Zionism, and instead of "blood shed like water," they expatiate on our spiritual slavery and the impossibility of developing our spiritual powers in exile. This jumping about from one side to the other, which shows clearly how weak is the belief in a material redemption of those who stand up for it, has become especially noticeable since the question of "Uganda" came up and since the birth of "Territorialism," which was really latent in the Zionism of material redemption. All those who had become Zionists only for the sake of saving the people from persecution could not understand how it was possible to reject the Uganda proposal, or any other similar proposal which seemed to offer us the desired salvation—"a secure home of refuge"—merely on the ground that we wanted Palestine and Palestine only, though we did not know when, if ever, it would be given to us. And what was the answer of the "Zion-Zionists" (a name, coined in the Uganda period, which also will interest the future historian)? Did they try to show that our scattered hosts could be gathered more quickly

and more easily into Palestine, or that in Palestine we should be better able politically to protect the Jews of the Diaspora? No! They had recourse to the "spirit," and openly admitted the bitter truth that neither in Palestine nor in any other territory could we gather all our exiles from the four corners of the globe; that the object of Zionism was only to establish "a secure home of refuge" for a minority of the people, which should become the centre of the whole people and influence it spiritually; and that this object could be achieved only in Palestine, the birth-place of our national spirit, and in connection with our historic memories and so forth. In fact, they adopted the whole philosophy of the "skyward soaring" school, only adding a few misplaced "political" phrases for form's sake. But after the Seventh Congress,¹ when the doubters had left the organisation and the "Zion-Zionists" were left to themselves, with nobody to ask awkward questions, they reverted to their old tactics; and now once more they dangle before the people the old promises of "an end to *galuth*." Meanwhile, however, a general movement for liberty, affecting all the nations in the Empire, arose in the land of our exile²; and in our own midst new propagandists began to hold out to the people new promises and to speak to it in a new language, which the masses found very agreeable. And so the Zionists began to change their tune, so as to win over the masses. "Political work in the Diaspora?—Of course! It is an essential part of Zionist work. Revolution? Why,

¹ [1905. It was at this Congress that the split on the question of East Africa (often loosely referred to as Uganda) took place. Some of the minority seceded and formed the Jewish Territorial Organisation.]

² [Russia.]

who so revolutionary as the Zionists? Socialism?—The very basis of Zionism!" And not alone that, but even the Palestinian work, to which in the end the Zionists returned, after they had awoke from the dream-land of diplomacy, took on a new epithet: "*real* work in Palestine." The public must understand that Zionists are not "reactionaries" pursuing a "spiritual" will-o'-the-wisp, but genuine "realists," and their work in Palestine is "real" work. But if at the Eighth Congress the opponents of "real" work (there are still such among Zionists) propound their doubts again, and demand an explanation of the value of such work from the point of view of the ingathering of the exiles and the redemption of the people, then, I fear, the champions of "real" work will be compelled once more to have recourse to the "spirit" in order to justify their "realism." For the fact is that all work in Palestine, of whatever kind, *material or spiritual*, so long as it is properly done, is "real" (that is, calculated to achieve its object and in harmony with actual conditions) only from the point of view of the spiritual redemption, because whatever strengthens our material and spiritual position in Palestine is a source of added strength to our corporate national spirit, and therefore brings us nearer by much or by little to our spiritual goal. But as for the redemption of the people and the end of *galuth*—that "real" goal is no more brought nearer by all this "real" work than we get nearer to the moon by jumping.

Thus Zionism is always running after the masses—and the masses run away from it.

A well-known economist has correctly indicated one of the principal causes through which the doctrine of Marx

made greater headway than similar doctrines before it. Marx, he points out, made his socialistic movement the movement of a definite section of society—the “proletariate”—whose condition and wants inevitably produce in each of its individual members a deep-rooted and powerful desire for a change in the social order, and which is therefore really fitted to fight unitedly and patiently for the attainment of the ideal that promises the satisfaction of their common demands. His predecessors in the development of Socialism, on the other hand, appealed vaguely and in general fashion to “the people,” “the poor,” and similar undefined entities.¹

A similar statement may be made about Zionism, though in a negative sense. One of the principal causes that have prevented Zionism hitherto from finding a firm and secure foundation is the fact that it has not so far succeeded in recognizing and defining its own “proletariate”—its natural body of supporters, which is really fitted to fight unwearyingly for the Zionist ideal, without being turned aside to follow any other. From its inception until the present day, Zionism has appealed to “the people” generally. But “the people” is not its natural support, because the only want of which the great majority of the people is sufficiently conscious—the want which alone, therefore, can form the basis of common national work—is the need for freedom from material pressure. So soon as we leave this common ground, we find the people divided into parties and classes, whose conscious demands differ in each case, and whose relation to our national life, therefore, in each case takes on a different form. If, then, Zionism could really point the way to our material regeneration,

¹ Sombart, *Socialismus und sociale Bewegung* (1905), p. 61.

it would doubtless unite under its banner the whole people, without distinction of party or class, except, perhaps, that small minority which is already "emancipated" from all national ties, and stands on the threshold of another way of escape from *galuth*. But, as I have already said, the people does not see in Zionism the way to its material regeneration, and cannot see it there, because it is not there. The unsophisticated masses have always a "feeling for reality" that prevents them instinctively from believing in promises inconsistent with the reality before their eyes. It is only occasionally, in times of deep distress from which there is no escape, that the masses will listen to a promise of redemption that lets a ray of comfort into their hearts; but they turn away and disregard it so soon as they see hope of a remedy more in touch with actualities. It is not strange, therefore, that Zionism, brief though its life has been, has already experienced many a sudden rise and many a sudden fall in the popular estimation, its fortune varying with circumstances. But is a people subject to such changes fitted to be the rank and file of a movement based on a long history, confronted by numerous obstacles, and demanding strenuous, wisely-directed, ordered effort, without sudden leaps backwards and forwards?

I think, then, that the course of events will compel Zionism to come gradually to understand itself and its supporters: to understand itself as a national movement of a *spiritual* character, whose aim is to satisfy the demand for a true and free national life in accordance with our distinctive spirit; and to find its supporters in that nationalist section which is sufficiently conscious, in all its individual members, of this demand, and which

in a certain sense may be called a "spiritual proletariat."

For, in spite of all the numerous latter-day sections of Jews, with their abbreviated names, it is still doubtful whether among all our "S.D." and "S.S."¹ with their ceaseless talk about their "proletariate psychology," there is really any considerable number of members who can properly be held to belong to the proletariat in the Socialist sense of the word. The mission of the proletariat is to hasten the Socialist solution by the concentration of wealth; and this mission can be fulfilled only by those who work in large industrial undertakings. The work of the master-workman and his assistants is not proletariat work, because, so far from hastening, it hinders that solution. Now the working-class Jew has practically no place in the large industrial undertakings; generally speaking, the so-called proletariat section of the Jews belongs to the class of master-workmen. But, on the other hand, there is among the Jews, and only among them, a proletariat in another sense—in the sense indicated by the combination of "national" and "spiritual." The position and the needs of this proletariat, which are common to all its individual members, compel it to feel a deep-rooted and powerful desire for a change in the established order; but the change desired in this case is not a concentration of the means of production, but just the opposite. What is wanted is a new means of production, wherewith to create a product of a special character. Among all civilised nations ours is the only one that has no special means of production of its own wherewith to create its spiritual and intellectual wealth, but is compelled to

¹ [S.D. = Social Democrats; S.S. = Zionist Socialists.]

make use of the means provided by other nations—their languages, their literatures, their schools and universities, and so forth—and thus to enrich the owners of these means of production by its work. But the proletariat that produces material wealth receives in payment at least a part of the wealth produced by its labour, and only the surplus is left to the owner of the means of production; whereas in our case almost all the result of our toil goes to swell the wealth of others. Our own national treasury is impoverished and empty; our own distinctive spirit dwindles and dwindles. And yet we are rich in spiritual and intellectual powers, and do productive work in every branch of life. This condition of things is distressing to all Jews whose kinship with their people is not one of blood merely, but whose national consciousness and general culture have developed to such a point that they can both understand and feel the deep tragedy of this national degradation. For the people so degraded produced thousands of years ago, for itself and with its own means of production, a store of spiritual wealth from which the world still draws sustenance; and it is impossible for them to imagine that all the endless sacrifices, with which for two thousand years our people has paid for the preservation of its spirit and its own form of life, are to have no result except to bring us at the present day to a condition of spiritual emptiness, the end of which will perhaps be a contemptible death. This constant feeling of distress necessarily impels these men to work for the freeing of our spirit and the products of our labour from alien dominion. Where there is a real want, be it physical or spiritual, there is a solid basis for a union of forces in joint work for the

satisfaction of the common demand. And so it is the men who are really conscious of this want who form the only section specially fitted to support the Zionist movement, and to work for it unitedly, patiently, in an organized manner, until its goal is reached.

I am fully aware that not all who feel this need are as yet convinced that they must unite under the banner of Zionism. Many of them still believe in the possibility of freeing the Jewish spirit, and continuing its internal development, even without a national centre. But they will change their minds when that spiritual freedom in exile, for which they wait, is attained, and when they see the net result of their hoping to "sing the Lord's song in a strange land." In Western Europe and in America, where the desired freedom has already been granted, and its effect on our national life is obvious, the conviction is already spreading that external freedom, the removal of the heavy hand of oppression, is not in itself sufficient to free our innermost spirit from its moral bondage to the strange environment that surrounds us on all sides in our exile. And this conviction will inevitably spread in Eastern Europe also when the external chains are broken there. Our people will then be able, within certain limits, to live a national life, in accord with its own spirit, just so far as it wills to do so. But *it will not be able so to will*. The will itself does not depend on free choice. A man may wish to will, and yet be unable, because at that particular moment the necessary conditions are absent, without which the will cannot become an active force. So, too, in the case of a nation. There can be no active national will to live a distinctive spiritual life, even though permission be given under the hand and seal of the ruling

power, where the individuals who compose the nation are surrounded by a spiritual atmosphere foreign to them, and breathe this atmosphere whether they will or no, without seeing in the whole world even a square yard of ground which their national spirit, and theirs alone, pervades, subject to no foreign overlord, and in which it creates with its own means of production enough spiritual wealth to satisfy the whole people.

I am aware also that the section that desires to free our national spirit, whether by means of a national centre in Palestine or without it, is not numerous, taken all together, at the present time. But this fact need not make us despair, as though in truth the death of our spirit were at hand, because it has no people to make it manifest in the world. The Hebrew spirit never sought its strength and power in numbers. "The Lord did not . . . choose you because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all people." The God of this nation, when He saw it "turn quickly from the way," did not fold up His Law and get Him gone, but said to the one man who remained faithful to Him: "Let Me alone . . . that I may consume them: and I will make of thee a great nation." It is a mistake to think that the national spirit is an abstract idea, which designates the sum of all the spiritual principles that manifest themselves in the life of the people in each generation, and that when this manifestation ceases it no longer exists. The national spirit is in fact a collective idea only in relation to the manner in which it came into being, as a result of the common life of a body of individuals closely connected with one another, and continuing through generations under certain conditions. But when it has once come into being, and

has found root in men's souls by virtue of a long history, then it becomes part of the psychology of the individual : its truth is vindicated in the individual, and does not depend at all on anything external to him. If I feel the Hebrew national spirit in my heart, and it gives a distinctive form to my inner life, then that spirit does exist in me, and its existence does not cease even if all the other Jews in my time no longer feel its existence in their own hearts. I assert, therefore, that if the majority of our people are unconsciously becoming more and more estranged from the national spirit, and if its children born in exile have made for themselves new gods like the gods of the peoples around them, and only a few remain faithful to our national idea in its historic form, and desire for it freedom and development : then these few are the heirs of our national possessions at the present time ; it is they who hold the thread of history, and do not allow it to be broken. So long as there is a single Jew who holds the thread, we cannot tell what its end will be. Perhaps the conditions of life will change, and the small remnant will again become " a great nation."

But how is it possible that the conditions of our life in exile should change in the manner necessary for the revival of the Jewish spirit? What power has a small party to strengthen and hasten this possibility? What security have we that the change, if it come about, will be firm and lasting?

These questions demand an answer not in words, but in deeds. Verbal answers we have given times without number. There is only one way, we have said, to change the conditions of our national life fundamentally, so that it shall become *our* life indeed, and not a pas-

sing shadow of the life of other people ; and that way is the foundation of a centre for our national spirit “ on its own native soil.” Further, we have promised more than once that this way of ours, like every new path, will be made and prepared by the few for the many, who will afterwards follow of their own accord. But when we came to turn our words into deeds, then it became clear that there was still chaos in the depths of our spirit, although the light of the idea played on the surface.

Whoever knows by experience how dear Palestine is still to every plain Jew, how his heart swells—sometimes even to the point of joyful tears—when he reads or hears of the revival of the Hebrew language among the children in Palestine, or of the success of the Hebrew colonies there—whoever knows this cannot deny that the actual work of building up a centre in Palestine, even before it approached its goal, could have had a wonderful influence on the spirit of the people in the lands of our exile. The truth is, that even now the majority of our people cherish their national inheritance, and desire its eternal preservation ; but the bondage of *galuth*, material and spiritual, cramps the heart, and renders the national feeling and will incapable of becoming an effective force in action. And yet, if our work in Palestine had been such as to show clearly that there is really a prospect and a fair hope for the life of our spirit and our national possessions in the land of their birth ; if the people had seen the foundations of the building laid by expert hands, one complete stone upon another, though the stones had been but small : then the people would have sought and found here a new source of life for its dormant national sentiment, and a new

strength of will to protect more effectively its spiritual possessions in exile.

But as things are, how can we prove the correctness of our answer? What are the results of our twenty years and more of work in Palestine? With regard to material work, we have only unsuccessful attempts to show; and as for spiritual work, we cannot even show such attempts (except, perhaps, the school at Jaffa),¹ for in fact scarcely anything has been done. Those who desired the "ingathering of the exiles" have laboured all these years, first of all in founding philanthropic colonies, and then in political talk; they have had neither the time nor the will to meddle in spiritual matters. Those, again, who desired the "revival of the spirit" have also dissipated all their time and their strength in spiritual work in the Diaspora; in all this time they have not created in Palestine one single spiritual product that could awake an echo in the nation's heart. It is as though they had forgotten the first principle of their own faith, that the revival of the spirit in exile can come about only through the influence of a national centre in Palestine. They have, indeed, *said* a great deal about the need for founding universities and schools, and other such needs, the satisfaction of which is beyond their power at present. But they have not done that which was both necessary and possible.

Here, for example, is an attempt to found a small literary organ in Palestine. I ask myself: Why was this not done long ago? In the Diaspora a large number of literary plants have bloomed and faded during the Zionist epoch; they have borne fruit, and have left some good behind them, whether it was much or little.

¹ [i.e., the *Chovevé Zion* Hebrew School.]

In Palestine, meanwhile, since the beginning of the movement there has not been published a single literary miscellany which has made its mark in our literature. Yet we did not feel that something was lacking. We constantly told the people that only in Palestine could our national spirit flourish and produce fruit after its kind; yet at the same time we were not ashamed to think that the people did not see in Palestine even a shadow of the fruit of its spirit, and that the little fruit that did grow was growing in other countries.

It is true that Palestine is still poor in spiritual forces generally, and in literary forces particularly; but that simply proves the truth of my contention. If we had always had a full and clear conception of the nature of our object, if we had always remembered that what we are seeking to build in Palestine is a refuge for our spirit, we could never have refrained from doing all that was possible to increase the spiritual wealth of Palestine, and to increase, little by little, its moral influence on the people. In that case we should undoubtedly have striven among other things to establish in Palestine a literary organ, an altar on which all our best national writers would have felt it their duty to offer their best, in order to win for it affection and honour in Jewry. An organ such as this, though it would have been at first an artificial creation, would certainly have uplifted the spirit and fostered literary talent in Palestine itself; perhaps also it would by now have become a true, natural literary centre for us, drawing sustenance from the forces which it had called to the land and developed there.

But it is as I said: in the human mind no idea springs from darkness into light at one bound. It was necessary for experience to teach us how slender is the thread on

which hangs all our spiritual work outside Palestine, before we could be made to remember that in reality we had no need of such experience, since it only taught us that which was implied in our idea from the very first.

It is just at this moment that you come and tell us : "The time has come to begin planting our literature in the land of its birth." Need I express my feelings when I read these words?

Yes, the time has come to begin planting, and planting not alone our literature, but also our spirit in all its aspects. All that now runs to waste in exile, voluntarily or involuntarily, must be gathered together and planted "on its own native soil," and every man in whom the Jewish spirit lives is bound to help in this planting to the utmost of his power, because therein lies our life and our last hope.

"Romanticism," our young men will say with a smile.

Let them smile—until they grow old enough to understand life as it is, and not as it appears through the glasses of a ready-made doctrine. Then they will understand that what they contemptuously call "romanticism" is the crown of life and the source of man's superiority over the brute. They will understand, too, that this very anti-romantic doctrine has its attraction principally because of its romantic element—because it offers scope for devoted service in the cause of a distant ideal. But if ever there comes a day when that ideal is realised, and romanticism disappears entirely, then there will arise a new generation, which will curse that day for the hunger it has brought—a hunger not for bread, but for romanticism, for some ideal striving which can once more give scope for exaltation, for sacrifice, and so fill the emptiness of a life of peace and plenty.

“WHEN MESSIAH COMES”

(1907)

“When Messiah comes, impudence will be rife.”

This ancient saying has been used so often as a weapon of controversy, that familiarity has robbed it of its sting. For this reason let me say at the outset that I quote it here for no controversial purpose, but wish, on the contrary, to point out that it really draws attention to a natural and permanent connection between two phenomena of human life, whereof the one is an inevitable consequence of the other. And like every objective truth, it neither censures nor reproves, but simply states a fact.

What we call “impudence” is not as a rule an original, inborn vice, but a quality which develops after birth out of a man’s exaggerated belief in his own worth, strength, wisdom or what not. This exaggerated opinion of himself makes a man hold himself more proudly than he ought before his betters, and censure and decry everybody who will not accept him at his own valuation. Now most men, in times of normal tranquillity, cannot help seeing that knowledge and experience are necessary for the conduct of human affairs, and that not all men have attained an equal degree of development or an equal level of ability and judgment. And so this “impudence” comes to be regarded as a bad thing, because it indicates either an excessive conceit of oneself—as though one were

superior to the whole world in learning and experience, and were above criticism—or an excessive stupidity—as though one were unaware that there is anything in life which calls for learning and understanding, and that not everybody is equally competent to pronounce judgment on everything.

But this quality wears a different aspect “ when Messiah comes ”—that is to say, when a certain body of men, no longer able to submit quietly to life’s tribulations, find or invent some Messiah who is to release them from all their troubles. Whether the Messiah is conceived by them as an individual, or as a collective body, or even merely as a new theory—the result is the same. Believing firmly in their Messiah, seeing in him the fountain of salvation, and consequently also the symbol of truth and goodness, and regarding themselves simply as his followers and his disciples, they naturally cease to recognise distinctions between man and man, or to admit any superiority in wisdom over folly, or in age over youth. For all alike are as dust compared with the Messiah, and all alike receive (or ought to receive) his teaching with passive acquiescence and unquestioning faith. No need any longer for superior knowledge or long experience in order to be able to distinguish between truth and falsehood, between good and evil. All can come in on equal terms and take truth and good ready-made from the Messiah’s storehouse. Whoever disagrees with what comes out of the storehouse, be he never so old and learned, is obviously a fool, an old heretic whom any stripling is entitled to despise. Those who stand outside the Messianic camp are astonished at this sudden decay of morals, at this upsetting of the proper relation between young and

old, between the nobodies and the somebodies. “Impudence,” they cry indignantly. But the Messianists themselves do not, and cannot, see anything wrong in their conduct. For it is in truth only an inevitable consequence of their fundamental belief that the Messiah puts great and small on one level, and that there are no longer high and low, but only brothers in Messiah and enemies of Messiah.

Thus the appearance of a Messiah and the growth of impudence are naturally and inevitably connected; and we therefore find that they have always appeared together, in every country and at every time, from the earliest days until the present. When an individual Messiah arose in Israel at the end of the period of the Second Temple, his first devotees—mostly very simple folk—rejected their national leaders and sages with scorn and contempt: precisely as did later the devotees—not less unlearned—of that corporate Messiah which was revealed to them in the form of the *Tsaddikim*, who, as intermediaries between Israel and his God, were to lighten the burden of *galuth* and hasten the redemption.¹ Both have their parallel in this present generation, which also has its Messiah, or rather Messiahs. But the modern Messiahs and the modern impudence are rather different in form, as is only natural, seeing that times have changed.

The Messiah of old was above reason and above nature, and faith in the redemption which he was to bring about was based not on logical demonstration,

¹ [The Hebrew word translated above “devotees” is *chassidim* = “pious ones.” This name is specifically given to a mystical sect which arose early in the 18th century. The Rabbis of this sect were called by their followers *tsaddikim* (= “righteous ones”) and were credited by them with supernatural powers.]

but on miracles, like the confounding of destiny and the upsetting of natural laws. Hence his followers needed no great cleverness in order to meet criticism. They met every possible objection by a single argument. “ He who can overthrow nature is not precluded from accomplishing a supernatural redemption, and therefore any difficulty based on natural laws is out of court.” Any child can master this simple argument in a trice—and straightway he is of Messiah’s company, one of his followers and evangelists, like all the other believers. For this reason the “ impudence ” of the Messianists of old was similarly simple and obvious, and had no need to force itself into an artificial mould. So-and-so denies the truth or the power of the Messiah : is there any room for discussion? The fellow, be he who he may, is a scapegrace, and all honour to whoever is first with an insult or a stick.

To-day things are different. Four centuries of free thought and the unravelling of nature’s mysteries have left their mark on the human race. To-day even a Messiah cannot defy reason and nature, but is compelled to base his redemption on logical demonstrations, and to put his message in the form of a system founded on nature and experience. Essentially, indeed, everything is as it used to be : the real basis of Messianism, now as then, is faith in a speedy redemption, a faith which has its roots not in reasoned demonstration, but in the craving to be redeemed. But the exigencies of our age do not allow faith any longer to ignore the demands of reason and nature. Even faith is compelled to speak their language if it would satisfy the modern man. So we get scientific systems of a Messianic character, which, differing one from another, have all this much

in common, that their scientific soundness is very much open to question, but leaves no doubt in the minds of the believers, who really need nothing more than the phraseology of science, as a seemly outer cloak for their faith. As the necessary phraseology is there, and the cloak is ready to hand, the believers hold on to the cloak with the utmost tenacity; every one of its threads is sacrosanct, and woe to him who disturbs a single one. They seem to feel unconsciously that if there is too much handling of their cloak, too much examination of its threads in the light of reason and genuine science, it will not be long before it is torn to tatters—and then what will become of their faith? Whence we find in all Messianic camps, to-day no less than of old, a fierce hatred of any attempt at criticism from within, and unlimited impudence towards those who stand without: but whereas this hatred and this impudence used to appear undisguised and unashamed, to-day they cloak themselves in reason and science, and so appear to be different. You must not think that X. is pilloried and jeered at because he has attacked their Messiah. Heaven forbid! Freedom of opinion is their first principle. No: his crime is that he has an axe to grind, and perverts scientific truth—which is, of course, solely and only that which is set forth for all time under hand and seal in this Manifesto or that Programme, and beyond it there is nothing.¹

¹ As I write these words some of the best German Social Democrats are making public confession that by sins of this kind their party has alienated many of its supporters, and that to this cause is due in part the great defeat which it suffered in the last elections. But this repentance will not save them from the same sin in future, because the sin is inherent in every Messianic movement. We Jews have only to look at what is happening around us, to be convinced that the characteristic in question is not peculiar to Germany or to the Social Democratic Party.

Have we a right to complain of the Messianists for all this? Can we blame them because their yearning for redemption is so deep that it begets this blind, all-conquering faith? No: we ought not to complain of them, but to envy them. Happy men—be their name Political Zionists, Social Democrats, or any other of the familiar names! Happy indeed, for Messiah stands on their threshold, and redemption knocks at their door, and truth is crystal-clear to them all, great and small alike. But how hard is life in our days for one who is not of their number; for one who cannot follow blindly after one Messiah or the other; for one who does not hear the voice that announces redemption and complete salvation, either close at hand or far away, either for his own time or for the days when his grandchildren shall lie in their graves; for one who still looks upon Science and Reason as divine powers, which stand above all sects and judge them all impartially, and not as standard-bearers and trumpeters in the service of a Messiah!

A SPIRITUAL CENTRE

(1907)

It has been observed that if men always remembered the true meaning of every word that they use or hear, disputes would be infinitely rarer. The truth of this remark is known by experience to anybody who happens to have promulgated some idea which the contemporary "reading public" did not like, and to have had his "heresy" exposed by the literary mouthpieces of that public. The hapless creature's first feeling is one of incredulity and astonishment. How, he thinks, is it possible so to pervert things, so completely to confuse ideas and to advance arguments which so fail to touch the point? He puts it down to the malevolence of his opponents, believes that they are purposely twisting his words, and complains bitterly to that same reading public in the name of truth and fairness. But later, when he finds that complaint is unavailing, and that the same thing happens time after time, so that malevolence alone cannot be responsible—then he is driven to the conclusion that there must be some more universal explanation of what he has experienced. The explanation is that the connection between a word and the idea contained in it is not so strong in the human mind as to make it impossible for a man to hear or to utter a word without immediately having a full and exact conception of the associated idea. Hence, when a man hears an opinion which runs counter to his way of thinking, he is apt unconsciously to grasp the novel opinion in an

incorrect form : he will change the meaning of this or that word until it becomes not difficult for him to refute the opinion by unsound arguments, in which again one word or another is used incorrectly. And all this counterfeiting is done by the thinking apparatus automatically, without the knowledge of its owner, by virtue of its inherent tendency to work at any given moment in accordance with the dominant requirements of the subliminal self at that moment.

I doubt whether there is any contemporary Jewish writer who is more familiar with this experience than myself. Were I to count up all the disputes with which, for my sins, our literature has been enriched—most of them simply glaring instances of the phenomenon in question—the account would be long indeed. But I wish here to adduce only one instance of a dispute which began fifteen years ago¹ and has continued to this very day.

Fifteen years ago there appeared for the first time an idea that afterwards occasioned endless expenditure of ink. “In Palestine,” I wrote, “we can and should found for ourselves a *spiritual centre of our nationality*.” My literary experience was not yet extensive, and I overlooked this important consideration : that in putting before the public an idea which does not accord with the general view, one must not merely put it in a logically clear and definite form, but must also reckon with the psychology of the reader—with that mental apparatus which combines unrelated words and ideas according to the requirements of its owner—and must try one’s utmost to avoid any word or expression which might afford an opening for this process of combination.

¹ [i.e., in 1892.]

I confess now that in view of this psychological factor I ought to have felt that the formula "a spiritual centre of our nationality" would afford a good opportunity to those who wished to misunderstand, although from the point of view of logic it is sufficiently clear and is well adapted to the idea which it contains.

"Centre" is, of course, a relative term. Just as "father" is inconceivable without children, so is "centre" inconceivable without "circumference"; and just as a father is a father only in relation to his children, and is merely So-and-so in relation to the rest of mankind, so a centre is a centre only in relation to its own circumference, whereas in relation to all that lies outside the circumference it is merely a point with no special importance. When we use the word "centre," metaphorically, in connection with the phenomena of human society, it necessarily connotes a similar idea: what we mean is that a particular spot or thing exerts influence on a certain social circumference, which is bound up with and dependent on it, and that in relation to this circumference it is a centre. But since social life is a complex of many different departments, there are very few centres which are universal in their function—that is, which influence equally all sides of the life of the circumference. The relation between the centre and the circumference is usually limited to one or more departments of life, outside which they are not interdependent. Thus a given circumference may have many centres, each of which is a centre only for one specific purpose. When, therefore, the word "centre" is used to express a social conception, it is accompanied almost always—except where the context makes it unnecessary—by an epithet which

indicates its character. We speak of a literary centre, an artistic centre, a commercial centre, and so on, meaning thereby that in this or that department of life the centre in question has a circumference which is under its influence and is dependent on it, but that in other departments the one does not exert nor the other receive influence, and the relation of centre and circumference does not exist.

Bearing well in mind this definition, which is familiar enough, and applying it to the phrase quoted above—"in Palestine we can and should found for ourselves a spiritual centre of our nationality"—we shall find that the phrase can only be interpreted as follows:—

"A *centre* of our nationality" implies that there is a national *circumference*, which, like every circumference, is much larger than the centre. That is to say, the speaker sees the majority of his people, in the future as in the past, scattered over all the world, but no longer broken up into a number of disconnected parts, because one part—the one in Palestine—will be a centre for them all, and will unite them all into a single, complete circumference. When all the scattered limbs of the national body feel the beating of the national heart, restored to life in the home of its vitality, they too will once again draw near one to another and welcome the inrush of living blood that will flow from the heart.

"Spiritual" means that this relation of centre and circumference between Palestine and the lands of the Diaspora will be limited of necessity to the spiritual side of life. The influence of the centre will strengthen the national consciousness in the Diaspora, will wipe out the spiritual taint of *galuth*, and will fill our spiritual life with a national content which will be true and natural,

not like the artificial content with which we now fill up the void. But outside the spiritual side of life, in all those economic and political relations which depend first and foremost on the conditions of the immediate environment, and are created by that environment and reflect its character--while it is true that in all those relations the effect of the spiritual changes (such as the strengthening of national unity and increased energy in the struggle for existence) will show itself to some extent, yet essentially and fundamentally these departments of life in the Diaspora will not be bound up with the life of the centre, and the most vivid imagination cannot picture to us how economic and political influence will radiate from Palestine through all the length and breadth of the Diaspora, which is co-extensive with the globe, in such manner and to such degree as would entitle us to say, without inexact use of language, that Palestine is the centre of our people in these departments also.

Now, at the time when I first used the phrase under discussion, I knew beforehand that I should excite the wrath of the *Chovevé Zion* (in those days it was they who held the field). But looking, as I did, solely at the logical side, I was sure that the brunt of their anger would fall on the word "centre"; for the use of that word involved a negation of the idea of a return of the whole people to Palestine, and so clipped the wings of those fantastic hopes which even then, in the days before the first Basle Congress, were proclaimed as heralding the end of the *galuth* and a complete and absolute solution of the Jewish problem in all its aspects. The epithet "spiritual" seemed to me so simple and clear, as a necessary logical consequence of

the assumption involved in the word "centre," that it never remotely entered my mind that here might be the stumbling-block, and that I ought at once to file a declaration to the effect that, although the centre would be spiritual in its influence on the circumference, yet in itself it would be a place like other places, where men were compounded of body and soul, and needed food and clothing, and that for this reason the centre would have to concern itself with material questions and to work out an economic system suited to its requirements, and could not exist without farmers, labourers, craftsmen, and merchants. When a man uses, for example, the expression "literary centre," does it occur to him to explain that he does not mean a place where there is no eating or drinking, no business or handicraft, but simply a number of men sitting and writing books and drinking in the radiance of their own literary talent? Imagine, then, my surprise when I found that my critics paid no attention to the word "centre," but poured out all the vials of their wrath on the epithet "spiritual," as though it contained all that was new and strange in the idea: as who should say, "A *spiritual* and not a *material* centre? Can such a thing be?"

But my amazement soon died away when I remembered the "psychological apparatus." It was bound to fasten on some word or other in order to make my unpopular theory appear absurd; and since the word "centre," if the critics dwelt on it and led the minds of their readers to analyse its meaning, was calculated not to serve that end, but, on the contrary, to make it clear where the absurdity really lay, they found it best to give "spiritual" all the emphasis. "A *spiritual* centre! Now do you understand what these people want? They

care nothing for a material settlement, for colonies, factories, commerce: they want only to settle in Palestine a dozen *batlanim*, whose business shall be spiritual nationality."

Great indeed is the power of psychology. This interpretation spread abroad, was accepted, and remains to this day a matter of course. Even those Zionists who have not got their knowledge of my views from the pamphlet literature which has flooded the world in recent years, but have read them in the original—even they are certain that that is what spiritual Zionism means. It has availed them nothing to read immediately afterwards, in the same article,¹ that the spiritual centre must be "a true miniature of the people of Israel," and that in the centre there will appear once more "the genuine type of a Jew, whether it be a Rabbi or a scholar or a writer, *a farmer or a craftsman or a business man*." It has availed nothing, because psychological factors dominate not only the person judging, but also his memory.

Three years ago,² I remember, after I had published in some journal a protest against the favourable reports about the condition of the Palestinian colonies that were then being spread abroad, for diplomatic purposes, a writer in the camp of the political Zionists became angry with me, and determined to shatter with one blow all my views on Zionism, and so remove a dangerous heresy. This idea he carried out in an elaborate article, which was continued through many numbers of the same journal. The details I have forgotten: they were

¹[i.e., the article "Dr. Pinsker and his Pamphlet," from which the phrase under discussion is quoted.]

²[i.e., in 1904.]

but the old arguments dished up in different words. But I still remember one thing, which provoked not only a smile but also reflections such as those which are the subject of the present essay. After proving conclusively that material factors are of great importance, and cannot be lightly brushed aside, our author reaches the conclusion that it is for that reason idle to confine our work solely to the foundation of a spiritual centre for our nationality: we must found in Palestine an *economic and spiritual* centre. It escaped his notice that so soon as he used the word "centre" he became himself a "spiritual Zionist," and in adding the epithet "economic" added exactly nothing. The journal in question appeared in Warsaw, which was also at that time the home of our author; and in order to understand the matter aright he had only to go into the street and ask any intelligent Pole: "What is Warsaw to the Polish people as a whole? Is it a spiritual centre of the nation, or a spiritual and economic centre?" The answer, I think, would have been something like this: "For the Polish people as a whole this city is certainly a spiritual centre of their nationality. Here the national characteristics find their expression in every department of life, here the national language, literature, and art live and develop; and all this, and what goes with it, influences the spirit of the Poles, binds them, wherever they may be, to the centre, and prevents the spark of nationality in the individual from becoming buried and extinguished. But an *economic* centre of the nation? My good sir! How could Warsaw be an economic centre for all the millions of Poles who are scattered over different lands, and whose economic lives depend on entirely different centres, where Polish

economic conditions do not count at all? ” I should not have advised our author, after getting an answer of that kind, to ask : “ How so? Are there not in Warsaw, besides spiritual things, ever so many factories and shops and other material things, without which it could not develop its spiritual side? And is it not therefore an economic and spiritual centre? ” I should not have advised him to ask that question, because I could not guarantee that the intelligent Pole would waste words on such a questioner.

But amongst ourselves “ the economic centre ” has become a current phrase with many people who on the one hand want to do their duty by the economic side of Zionism (that is *de rigueur* nowadays), and on the other hand cannot achieve the imaginative eagle-flights of “ Proletarian Zionism,”¹ which promises to create in Palestine a national economic system so healthy and so vast that it will be able to provide room and work for all those Jews who are being more and more completely elbowed out of the best branches of industry in the lands of their exile (that is, for almost nine-tenths of the people). Zionists like these, in order to get rid of the difficult question as to the possibility of settling the majority of our people in Palestine, even when their new economic system becomes a fact, consent to accept half the loaf, and want to regard Palestine as merely an economic *centre*. But herein they escape one snare to fall into a worse : they have got rid of an external problem, which depends on arguments from experience,

¹[The name given to a Zionist doctrine based on Marxian Socialism, which had a vogue in Russia, especially among the younger generation, at the time when this article was written. The “ internal process ” (mentioned later) belongs to the terminology of this doctrine.]

and are caught instead in an inner contradiction, which mere logic can expose. With the "Proletarian" formula one can still argue: one can demand, for instance, a somewhat clearer explanation of that "internal process" by which the economic system of Palestine will become able to absorb immigration on a scale unparalleled in history: but at all events there is no self-contradiction. Whereas the conception of "an economic centre of the nation," when applied to a people scattered over the whole world, leaves no room for argument or questioning, because its refutation is in itself.

But psychological combinations of this kind are a good sign. They show—in common with other clear signs—that the "centre" as an idea is making headway and is leading to various deductions which could not have been imagined some years ago. And that is the all-important thing. In time the deduction which is involved in the word "spiritual," when rightly understood, will also be drawn, and it will no longer be possible to suppress it by psychological means. True, all this will not do away with the old nonsense about "spiritual Zionism"; on the contrary—and this is even now unmistakably evident—the more the substance of spiritual Zionism prevails, the more will psychology try to distinguish the victorious tendency from its hated name. But what of that? Let the name be beaten, so but the idea prevail!

SUMMA SUMMARUM

(1912)

This is a summary not of facts and figures, but of impressions stored in my mind in the course of sixty days during which our national work enveloped me in its atmosphere and engrossed my every thought: ten days at Basle during the Tenth Congress, and fifty days afterwards in Palestine.

Fourteen years have passed since I saw a Zionist Congress (the first), and twelve years since I witnessed the condition of our work in Palestine. My object in revisiting both the Congress and the land was not, as before, to go into details, to collect material, in the shape of facts and figures, for the solution of certain practical problems. On this occasion I opened my mind wide to the different impressions that crowded in on me from all sides; I allowed them to enter and to dissolve of themselves into a single general impression—a kind of mental summary of all that I saw and heard in connection with our movement and our work in and out of Palestine. I am of those who stand on the threshold of age and look back on many long years of work and struggle, of victories and defeats, of pain and of joy. A man in this position finds it necessary at times to turn his thoughts for a while from questions of detail, and to take a more comprehensive view, so that he may find for his own satisfaction an answer to that broad, fundamental question which occasionally disturbs his sleep: What is the purpose, what the result, of all

this work which has occupied your life and consumed your strength?

It was this necessity that took me on this occasion to Basle and to Palestine. And let me confess that it is a long time since I spent such happy days as those of my travels. Not that all is now right with the movement; not that the sun has shone on our work, and driven away the shadows, and spread light and joy everywhere. We are still a long way from such a happy consummation. Even to-day the shadows are many; if they are less in one place, they are more in another. But one fact is becoming increasingly clear: our work is not an artificial product, a thing that we have invented to give the people something to do, as a palliative for the national sorrow. That idea might be entertained if aim and achievement corresponded, if the work were done for the purpose of attaining that result which it is in fact attaining. If that were so, one might doubt whether the attainment of this result were really necessary for the nation, and whether the whole business were not artificial. But that is not the case. Since the beginning of the movement the workers have had one goal in view, and have been unconsciously approaching another. This dualism is the surest sign that the driving force is not reasoning reflection, but something much deeper: one of those natural instincts which work in darkness, and make a man do their will whether he likes it or not, while he believes that his action is directed to the object which his reason has set before him. This driving force is the instinct of national self-preservation. By it we are compelled to achieve what must be achieved for the perpetuation of our national existence; and we follow it—albeit without clear con-

sciousness, and by crooked paths—because follow it we must if we would live. I used to be distressed by this dualism; I used to fear that we might lose the right path—the path of life—through making for a goal to which no path can lead. But now that I have seen the results of the work so far, I have no such fears as to its ultimate fate. What matters it that the work is professedly directed to an object which it cannot attain? *L'homme propose . . .* History does not trouble about our programme; it creates what it creates at the bidding of our “instinct of self-preservation.” Whether we ourselves understand the true import and purpose of our work, or whether we prefer not to understand—in either case history works through us, and will reach its goal by our agency. Only the task will be harder and longer if true understanding does not come to our aid.

That is the real state of the case. All that I saw and heard at Basle and in Palestine has strengthened my conviction that the “instinct of self-preservation” slumbers not nor sleeps in the nation's heart. Despite our mistakes, it is creating through our agency just what our national existence requires most of all at present: *a fixed centre for our national spirit and culture, which will be a new spiritual bond between the scattered sections of the people, and by its spiritual influence will stimulate them all to a new national life.*

To miss Basle during the Tenth Zionist Congress was to miss seeing an extraordinary medley of languages and ideas—the result of an internal crisis of which everybody was conscious, but which everybody tried hard not to see. Throughout the Congress there was a struggle between two sections, the “political” and the “practical.” You hear the “politicals” declare

that they, too, are really "practical," only that they do not forget "the political end"; you hear the "practicals" protest that they, too, are really "political," only that they do not forget "the practical means." And both sections alike protest that the "State" has really been given up, but the Basle Programme has not been given up to the extent of a single comma.¹ . . . In the end the "practicals" won: that is to say, the essential work of Zionism was pronounced to be the extension of the Jewish settlement, and the furthering of education and culture, in Palestine. Thereupon the victors stood up and promised to guard faithfully the Basle Programme and "the Zionist tradition developed during fourteen years."

But all this confusion was only an inevitable consequence of the state of mind in which the two sections came to the Congress.

The Zionism of the "politicals," most of whom were brought into the camp not by a heartfelt longing for the persistence and the development of Jewish nationality, but by a desire to escape from external oppression through the foundation of a "secured home of refuge" for our people—their Zionism is necessarily bound up with that object, and with that alone: take that away, and it remains an empty phrase. For this reason they cannot help seeing that the "practical work" which their opponents make the basis of Zionism is not calculated to hasten that end which is, for them, the only end. They still remember the estimate which they

¹ [The first article of the Basle Programme, formulated in 1897, reads: "Der Zionismus erstrebt für das jüdische Volk die Schaffung einer öffentlich-rechtlich gesicherten Heimstätte in Palästina." Until the Ninth Congress (1909) this was generally understood as involving the creation of an autonomous "Jewish State" in Palestine.]

heard in the opening speech of the first Congress : that the colonising work of the *Chovevé Zion* will bring the exiled people back to Palestine in nine hundred years ! But the course of events during recent years has destroyed their hope of reaching that goal more quickly by means of that “ political ” work which is the foundation of “ the Zionist tradition.” Hence they were in a quandary at this Congress, and did not know how to extricate themselves. They came with empty hands, and professed devotion to an object which there were no means of attaining ; they could only fall back on the hope of a vague future, when external conditions may perhaps become more favourable to “ political work.” This explains also the excessive shyness which they displayed. They did not go out to battle, as they used to do, with trumpetings and loud alarums ; there was scarcely a mention of those familiar flourishes, which they used to utter with such boldness and vigour, about the salvation which Zionism is to bring to all oppressed and persecuted Jews. Even Nordau, in his speech on the condition of the Jews, changed his tune on this occasion. The whole idea of his speech, which has been given at the opening of every Congress, and has become an essential part of the “ Zionist tradition,” was to justify Zionism *on the ground of anti-Semitism*. “ You see ”—such, in effect, used to be his argument—“ how perilous is your position all over the world ; there is no way out. And *therefore*, if you wish to be saved, join us, and we will save you.” But on this occasion Nordau contented himself with describing the evil, and dealing out reproaches to Jews and non-Jews. The essential thing—the “ therefore ”—was lacking almost entirely. And throughout the Congress there were

heard speeches which openly opposed this Zionism based on anti-Semitism, and the speakers were not shouted down, as they certainly would have been in earlier years.

The "practicals"—mostly Eastern Jews and their Western pupils, for whom national Judaism is the very centre of their being, and who are ruled unconsciously by the "instinct of national self-preservation"—they came to Basle in a very different frame of mind. They brought with them a complete programme of "practical work in Palestine," embracing both colonising and cultural activity; and they came with a settled conviction that all the various branches of this work were the proper means to the attainment of the end—THE end—the one and only, yet undefined. The "politicals" raised their old question: "Do you honestly believe that the occasional purchase of a small piece of land, the foundation of a tiny colony with infinite pains, a workmen's farm without security of tenure, a school here, a college there, and so forth—that these are the means of acquiring a 'home of refuge' as understood by the 'Zionist tradition'—a refuge which will end our troubles by ending our exile?" The "practicals" had no satisfactory answer. None the less, they stood to their guns, and stoutly maintained that work in Palestine is the only road that leads to *the* end: but . . . At this point they broke off abruptly, and did not complete their thought—for a very good reason. They dared not expressly repudiate that article of faith which alone has made Zionism a popular movement—"the redemption of the nation." They dared not recognise and acknowledge that the end of which they speak to-day differs from that of the "Zionist tradition."

What they are working for is not "a home of refuge for the *people* of Israel," but "a fixed centre for the *spirit* of Israel." All branches of the present work in Palestine, *be it buying land or founding schools*, are sure means to the attainment of that end, but have nothing to do with the other. The "practicals" were inwardly conscious of this truth even while the "politicals" still had the upper hand, and for this reason they joined with the "politicals" in fighting it bitterly and angrily. It was a disturbing factor, of which they would fain be rid. But now that the star of "political" Zionism had waned, this conviction had grown stronger in the minds of the "practicals," and had become a real driving force. As yet, however, they lacked the moral courage to intensify this subconscious whisper into a clear profession of faith. Thus the real object remained beneath the threshold of consciousness, while above the threshold there wandered about, like disembodied spirits, here means without an object, there an object without means; and imagination tried hard to combine the two.¹

But while the "makers of history" inside the Con-

¹ It may be worth while to mention here an article written at Basle during the Congress and printed in the *Jewish Chronicle* (25 Aug., 1911), as it is a striking example of the confusion of thought which reigned at this Congress. The writer regards the victory of the "practicals" as an abandonment of the national ideal, and expresses his surprise that Hebrew occupied so prominent a place at such a Congress. The Herzlian Zionists, he thinks, standing as they do for a national ideal, naturally desire the revival of the national language; but these "practicals," who have turned their backs on the national ideal, and made Zionism merely a colonising scheme—what interest have they in the revival of Hebrew? Could not Jews live comfortably in their Colonies in Palestine even if they spoke other languages, like the Jews of the rest of the world?—I should advise those against whom this argument is directed not simply to dismiss the paradox with a smile, but to ask themselves how it came about that their aims could be so misunderstood.

gress Hall were in the dark, it was outside the Hall, among the crowds attracted to Basle by the Congress, that I saw quite clearly what history has really been doing. In the fourteen years since the first Congress we have been joined by a body of Jews of a new kind : men in whom the national consciousness is deep-rooted, and is not measured by *Shekalim*¹ or limited by a Programme, but is an all-pervading and all-embracing sentiment. Jews of this type came to Basle from all the ends of the earth ; they returned to their people out of the gulf of assimilation, most of them yet young in years, able and willing to work for the national revival. When I saw these men—our heirs—outside the Congress Hall, I said to myself : Never trouble about those who are inside ! Let them make speeches and pass resolutions and believe that they are hastening the redemption. The distant redemption may not be any nearer ; but the estranged hearts are drawing near. In spite of all, history is doing its work in this place, and these men are helping, whether they know it or not.

This same historical tendency, dimly discerned at Basle through the dark cloud of words, I found in Palestine clearly revealed in the light of facts. The more I travelled and observed, the more evident it became to me that what is happening in Palestine—despite all the contradictions and inconsistencies—is tending broadly towards a single goal—that goal which I mentioned above. No doubt we have a long journey to travel yet ; but even an untrained eye can see our destination on the distant horizon. If any there be for

¹ [The Biblical *Shekel* (plural *Shekalim*) has been adopted as the unit of contribution to the Zionist Organisation.]

whom the horizon is too narrow, and the goal too petty, let him go to Zionist meetings outside Palestine: there he will be shown a wider prospect, with larger aims at the end of it. But let him not go to Palestine. In Palestine they have almost forgotten the wider prospects. Realities are too strong for them there: they can see nothing beyond.

Take the National Bank, which was intended to provide a foundation for "the redemption of the people and the land" by *political* means. What is the Bank doing? Needless to say, its political object has been abandoned and forgotten. But even in the mere work of colonisation it neither does nor can achieve great things. Its business consists—and must consist, if it wishes to survive—in dealings with local tradesmen, Jews and non-Jews, and its profits are derived chiefly from the latter. All that it does for Jewish colonisation, or all that it could do—if we agree with its critics that it could do more than it does—without danger to itself, is so little, that one cannot even conceive any possible connection between it and the "larger aims," or imagine it to be moving at all along the road that leads to the complete "redemption." By this time, apparently, there are many people outside Palestine as well who have ceased to hope much from the Bank in the matter of land-settlement; and they now look for the solution to an Agrarian Bank. But possibly it would be worth while first of all to examine what little the existing Bank has done in the way of loans to the colonies, in order to learn what this experience has to teach as regards the problems of agrarian credit in Palestine. It is not enough to adduce examples from other countries, where the conditions and the people

are different, to demonstrate what agrarian credit can do. Credit is a very useful thing if it succeeds, but a very harmful thing if it fails. Everything depends on local conditions and the character of the people. The existing Bank has followed precedent in its attempts to help the colonies already in existence—and with what success? The colonists will tell you. No doubt I shall be told that I am drawing a false analogy, for such-and-such reasons. But I am not here attempting to express an opinion on this question of an Agrarian Bank, which has already been much discussed, and of which the merits and demerits have been fully canvassed. My purpose is merely to hint at the difficulties of the project, even if it is carried out on a very modest scale, so as to suggest that it is premature at the present stage, when the Agrarian Bank is not even in sight, to talk about the great things that it is going to do. Our colonisation work in Palestine is carried out under conditions of such multifarious difficulty, that even small things have to be done with extreme care, and precedent alone is no safe guide. If the proposed Agrarian Bank is really going to aim high—to aim, that is, at something considerable in relation to “the redemption of the people and the land”—we cannot yet say whether in the end it will help or hurt.¹

Then there is the National Fund, and its work for “the redemption of the land” by commercial means, for which purpose it was created. The Fund has already spent a great deal of its money: and how much has it redeemed? How much could it have redeemed if it had spent many times as much? A few scattered pieces of land, lost in the large areas of land not

¹ [The Agrarian Bank is still (1921) only a project.]

redeemed. Meanwhile, the price of land in Palestine is going up by leaps and bounds, especially in districts where we gain a footing, and the amount of land which it is in the power of the Fund to redeem with the means at its command grows correspondingly less and less. And there is another factor, independent of finance, which lessens its possibilities still further. Many natives of Palestine, whose national consciousness has begun to develop since the Turkish revolution, look askance, quite naturally, at the selling of land to "strangers," and do their best to put a stop to this evil; while the Turkish Government—be its attitude to our work whatever it may—is not likely to irritate the Arabs for our sakes: that would not suit its book. Thus the purchase of land becomes more and more difficult, and the idea of "the redemption of the land" shrinks and shrinks, until no Palestinian whose eyes are open can see in the National Fund what it was in the imagination of its founders—the future mistress of all or most of the land in Palestine. It is clearly understood in Palestine that many years of hard work, with the help of the National Fund or by other means, will achieve no more than this: to win for us a large number of points of vantage over the whole surface of Palestine, and to make these points counterbalance by their *quality* the whole of the surrounding area. For this reason, people in Palestine do not talk much about the coming "redemption"; they work patiently and laboriously to add another point of vantage, and another, and yet another. They do not ask: "How will these save us?" They all feel that these points *themselves* are destined to be, as it were, power-stations of the national spirit; that it is not necessary to regard them as a first step towards "the

conquest of the land " in order to find the result worth all the labour.

Then, again, there are the Colonies already established, which were born in pain and nurtured with so much trouble. They also do not fire the imagination to the pitch of regarding them as the first step towards " the redemption."

It is true that the great progress which has been made in most of the Colonies is matter for rejoicing. Twelve years ago one knew what to expect on entering a Jewish Colony in Palestine. From the farmers one would hear bitter complaints about their intolerable condition, charges of neglect of duty against the hard-hearted administrators, and last, but not least, a long list of requirements, involving large sums of money, for the proper equipment of each farmer. The administrators on their side would rail against the farmers, call them lazy *schnorrers*, who were always asking for more, though their condition was not at all bad, and denounce the schedule of requirements as a fabrication. To-day there is no echo of these recriminations in most of the Colonies. During the intervening years the administrators—it is but just to them to say so—have done all that they could to remedy their earlier mistakes. They have extended the Colonies wherever it was possible to buy land in the neighbourhood; they have founded new Colonies for those who could not find room in the old; and in general they have endeavoured to finish their work, to free the Colonies gradually from their own supervision, and to transfer the management and the responsibility to the farmers themselves, so that they should at last realise that the man who wants to live must work and look after himself, instead of depending

always on external help. No doubt one cannot yet speak of the complete emancipation of the Colonies as an accomplished fact. The strings are still there, and the absentee Administration still holds them. But it no longer *pulls* the strings, as it used to do, and, consequently, its existence is hardly noticed. So, if one visits one of these Colonies to-day, one hears quite another tune. "We are independent"—that is the first thing they tell one, with the pride of men who know the value of freedom. This pride makes them exaggerate the present blessings, just as they used to exaggerate the evil. "All's right with the Colony. It is strong and secure, and pays its workers well. No doubt some people are badly off. But what of that? There are failures everywhere. The man who cannot succeed leaves, and makes room for another. The great thing is that the Colony as a whole is able to exist and to develop properly. True, it lacks this, that, and the other, and we cannot yet supply the deficiencies; but in course of time they will be supplied. We need patient work, and everything will come in good time." That is the prevailing note of what I heard in nearly all the Colonies which I visited.¹ Any visitor to Palestine who brings with him, as I did, painful and humiliating recollections of years ago must rejoice beyond measure at all this, and must be inclined to take an extremely optimistic view of the development of the colonisation movement in general.

¹ I speak (here and further on) only of the Colonies in Judea and Lower Galilee. I did not visit Upper Galilee on this occasion. There are, indeed, two or three Colonies in Judea which are exceptions; but special reasons have made them unprosperous and kept their inhabitants in the old rut. We are not here concerned with these individual problems.

But all this is highly satisfactory only so long as one regards this colonisation movement as something good *in itself*. Think but once of the “political aim,” of the first article of the Basle Programme, and the optimism vanishes at once, and gives place to a depressing feeling of poverty and emptiness.

Thirty years' experience of the life of the Colonies must finally drive us to the conclusion that while Hebrew Colonies can exist in Palestine, and in large numbers, Hebrew agriculturists—those who are to be the foundation of the “home of refuge”—cannot be made even in Palestine, except in numbers too small to bear any relation to so large an aim. The Jew is too clever, too civilised, to bound his life and his ambitions by a small plot of land, and to be content with deriving a poor living from it by the sweat of his brow. He has lost the primitive simplicity of the real farmer, whose soul is bound up in his piece of ground, whose work is his all, and who never looks beyond his narrow acres: as though a voice from above had told him that he was born to be a slave to the land with his ox and his ass, and must fulfill his destiny without any unnecessary thinking. That agricultural idyll which we saw in our visions thirty years ago has not been and cannot be realised. The Jew can become a capable farmer, a country gentleman—of the type of Boaz—who understands agriculture, is devoted to it, and makes a living out of it: the sort of man who goes out every morning to his field, or his vineyard, to look after his workmen as they plough or sow his land, plant or graft his vines, and does not mind even giving them a hand when he finds it necessary. A man of this type—close to the land and to nature, and very different in character from

the Jew of the city—a Jew can become. But at the same time he wants to live like a civilised being; he wants to enjoy, bodily and mentally, the fruits of contemporary culture; the land does not absorb his whole being. This excellent type is being created before our eyes in Palestine, and in time it will certainly reach an uncommon degree of perfection. But of what use is all this for building a “home of refuge”? “Upper-class” farmers of this kind, who depend on the labour of others, cannot be the foundation of such a building. In every State the foundation is the rural proletariat: the labourers and the poor farmers, who derive a scanty livelihood from their own work in the fields, whether in a small plot of their own, or in the fields of the “upper-class” farmers. But the rural proletariat in Palestine is not ours to-day, and it is difficult to imagine that it ever will be ours, even if our Colonies multiply all over the country. As for the present, we all know that the work is done mostly by Arabs from the neighbouring villages, either journeymen, who come in the morning and return home in the evening, or regular labourers, who live in the Colony with their families. It is they who are doing for us the work of the “home of refuge.” And as for the future, the number of the Colonies will grow, in so far as it grows, through men of capital, who will found new Colonies of the same “wealthy” type. Colonies for poor men can only be founded by organisations, and their number must be so limited that they can count for nothing in comparison with the need of creating a rural proletariat to cover the whole country and win it by manual labour. Even an Agrarian Credit Bank will not make much difference from this point of view. Such a bank—despite all the

great things prophesied for it—will be much better able to help in the foundation of “wealthy” Colonies than to found Colonies for poor men with its own means. Perhaps its inability to increase the number of such Colonies will really be a blessing in disguise. For if they existed in large numbers they must all be full of men quite unfitted for such a difficult task. Only if they are very few can we hope for their survival and development through a process of natural selection, by which the man who has not the necessary qualities will make way for another, and in time these Colonies will gather to themselves all the small body of born agriculturists which is still left among us.¹

However that may be, this is not the way in which our rural proletariat can be made. It may be said that it will be made in ordinary course in the “wealthy” Colonies, through the natural increase of the inhabitants and the consequent division of the land; that the sons or grandsons of the farmers will themselves become poor labourers, living by the work of their hands. But experience shows that this, too, is a vain hope. The children who are born in the Colonies have also the cleverness of the Jew. When the son sees that his paternal inheritance will not be sufficient to make him a substantial farmer, and that he is doomed to be one of those pillars of society, the agricultural labourers, he quickly leaves the Colony, and goes to seek his fortune overseas, where he is content to work like a slave, so long as he is free from bondage to the land, and is able to dream of a prosperous future. But it would be doing

¹ The Colonies of this type, founded during the last few years, have already been left by many of the first settlers, whose places have been taken by others.

these sons of the Colonies a grievous wrong to imagine them lacking in love for Palestine. Most of them do love the country, and long for it, even after they have left it. Some of them return to it in after years, if they have succeeded abroad in acquiring enough money to enable them to settle comfortably in Palestine. But the trouble is that love of the country alone cannot breed agriculturists; for that you must have also love of the *land*. The genuine agriculturist feels that leaving the land is like giving up life. The inherited link between himself and the land is so strong and deep that he cannot sever it. He therefore prefers to endure poverty and want, to live all his life like a beast of burden, rather than to leave the land. But this trait of the genuine agriculturist disappears gradually even in places where it exists, so soon as it comes into contact with a cultured environment. It is clearly impossible to create it where it does not exist, and most of all in a people like ours, in which two thousand years of wandering have implanted traits of an exactly opposite character.

There remains, then, only one hope: the young labourers who come to Palestine with the intention of devoting their lives to the national ideal, of "capturing labour" in Palestine and of creating in our existing and future Colonies that rural proletariat which is so far non-existent. It is significant that the "labour question" has latterly become almost the central problem of our colonisation work. It is felt on all hands that bound up with this question of labour is a still larger question—that of the whole aim of Zionism. If these

¹ [i.e., securing the exclusive employment of Jewish labour on Jewish-owned land.]

labourers cannot succeed in supplying what is lacking, that proves that even national idealism is not strong enough to create the necessary qualities of mind and heart; and we must therefore reconcile ourselves to the idea that our rural settlement in Palestine, even if in course of time it develops up to the maximum of its possibilities, will always remain an upper stratum, a culturally developed minority, with the brains and the capital, while the rural proletariat, the manual labourers who form the majority, will still not be ours. This, of course, involves a complete transformation of the character and aim of Zionism. No wonder, then, that there have been so many suggestions for improving the condition of the labourers. Everybody sees that so far the labourers have not succeeded very well in their mission: in recent years many of them have left the country, while few have arrived there, and the position of those who remain is insecure. The general tendency is to put the blame on certain external difficulties, and to look for ways of removing those difficulties—as, by persuading the colonists to give Jewish a preference over Arab labourers; by making things more comfortable for the labourers in the matter of food and lodging; and many other familiar suggestions. The Zionist public consoles itself with the belief that when all these steps are taken the number of Jewish labourers will steadily increase with the increase of work, and that as the settlement grows and the amount of work increases, so will our labouring rural proletariat increase, and thus the “secure home of refuge” will be built up by our own hands, from the foundation to the roof.

Now it seems to me that the time is not very far

distant when the external difficulties will no longer stand in the way of the labourers, or, at least, will be reduced to such small proportions that it will no longer be possible to regard them as an insurmountable barrier. The National Fund and other institutions are already trying hard to improve the position of the labourers, and there is no doubt that little by little everything that can be done will be done. Even the greatest difficulty—that of the strained relations between the labourers and the colonists—is visibly growing less. On the one side, most of the labourers now see that it is unfair to demand of any man that he should receive with open arms those who look down on him and make no attempt to conceal the hatred and contempt which they feel for him as a “bourgeois”; and so they try to adopt a more conciliatory attitude than hitherto. On the other side, the colonists are beginning to see that it is not only their duty but also their interest to increase the amount of Jewish labour in the colonies (there is no need here to labour this point, which has been often made before); and so we see in the colonies the development of a certain tendency to employ Jewish labour as far as possible. It is true that most of the colonies still believe that the possibilities of employing Jewish labour are very small (again for reasons too familiar to need explaining here), and an outsider who has paid a brief visit to Palestine cannot express a definite opinion as to the soundness of their judgment on this point. Speaking generally, however, I have no doubt that the more the colonists become inclined to employ Jewish labour, the greater will the possibilities automatically become, until they reach their real limit. But after the removal of those external difficulties which we ourselves can

remove we shall find out that the way is beset with more formidable difficulties, which do not depend on our own will.

In every colony and farm which I visited, I talked a great deal with the labourers, and listened attentively to what they said. They expressed many different and conflicting opinions, and were not always all agreed even on the most important questions. This notwithstanding, all these conversations left on my mind one general impression, and that impression did not encourage me to believe in the ability of these young men to accomplish the great task which they had set before themselves.

These young labourers, who come to Palestine with the idea of "capturing labour," mostly bring with them from abroad the hope of becoming independent farmers after some years of work; only a few come with the fixed intention of remaining labourers all their lives. All alike work for a certain time with enthusiasm and devotion, but after a while the question of their future begins to exercise their minds. Those whose hope from the beginning was to become farmers are, of course, discouraged when they see how remote is the chance of attaining their ambition; that was only to be expected. But even those who came with the intention of remaining labourers begin to feel that a life such as theirs is all very well for a time, but is more than they can endure as a permanency. The civilised man in each one of them begins to clamour for self-expression, and cannot reconcile himself to the idea that he must go on digging or ploughing from morning till evening all his days, and at best be rewarded for all his toil by a meagre subsistence. So the weaker among them leave the country

with bitterness in their hearts, and the more obstinate remain in the country with bitterness in their hearts ; and you may see them wandering from one colony to another, working in one place for a time, then suddenly leaving it for another, not because they want a better job, but because they are restless in spirit and have no peace of mind.

The labourers at present in Palestine may be divided, broadly speaking, into four classes. There are first the unskilled labourers, who do simple work such as digging, and with difficulty earn enough to satisfy their most elementary needs. This class is very far from being contented ; many of its members have left the country, many more will leave, and the rest will for the most part pass into the other classes. Secondly, there are labourers who are expert at certain kinds of work (such as grafting) which require skill and care. They earn good money, and their position is not bad. Yet they are mostly anxious to pass into the third class, that of the farmer-labourers, who have each his own small holding in the neighbourhood of some colony, and work on their own land, but eke out a livelihood by working for others in the colony ; or—where the holdings are very small—work mostly for others and only a little for themselves. This experiment has been started by various institutions, which have bought land in or near to a colony and have given plots of it to selected labourers. In some places there are labourers who do well with their holdings, and therefore are already hoping that before long they will cease to be labourers and become independent farmers. Fourthly, there are the labourers who have already attained this ideal of becoming independent farmers, and no longer work for others,

but are still sometimes counted as labourers because they maintain certain relations with their former "party." The members of this class are few, and most of them are men whom the Jewish Colonisation Association settled in Lower Galilee on the tenant-farmer system. Their holdings are comparatively large, and they have neither time nor need to work for others; on the contrary, they themselves need labour at certain seasons, and then these ex-labourers, having become employers, do not invariably employ Jewish labour!

This last-mentioned phenomenon gave me much food for thought all the time that I was in Palestine. Among these farmers I knew some young men who had previously been regarded as among the pick of the labourers, not only from the point of view of efficiency, but also from that of character and devotion to the national ideal. If these men—I said to myself—could not stand the test, then perhaps it is really impossible for anybody to stand it, and whether it be for the reasons which the farmers suggest, or for other reasons, the fact is there all the same. But when I put this problem to labourers who had not yet become farmers, they replied that these comrades of theirs, when once they had become farmers, had lost their proletariat mentality and acquired a different psychology. Then I asked further: "If so, where is the solution? You yourselves tell me that most of your comrades came to Palestine in the hope of becoming farmers in course of time, and that as this hope grew fainter (because the Jewish Colonisation Association changed its system, and ceased to settle on its land labourers who had not a certain amount of money) the number of new arrivals grew less. But if the labourers come with the hope of becoming farmers,

and then, when they have achieved their ambition, lose their idealism and employ non-Jews on their own land, how can you ever 'capture labour,' and what is the good of your efforts? "

To this question the labourers nowhere gave me a satisfactory answer! ¹

Such is the condition of "practical work in Palestine," and such its relation to "the redemption of the people and the land." The hope of a future redemption is an age-long national hope, still cherished by every Jew who is faithful to his people, whether as a religious belief or in some other form. Every man can picture the realisation to himself as it suits him, without regard to actual present conditions: for who knows what is hidden in the bosom of the distant future? But if men set out to achieve the redemption by their own efforts, they are no longer at liberty to shut their eyes to the facts. There must be some natural chain of cause and

¹ There is a further class of "contractor-labourers," called in Palestine *k'vutzoth* (groups), who work National Fund land in some places on a co-operative basis. But the results of this experiment are not yet clear, and in any case the system cannot be expected to develop so far as to be able to bring about a radical change in the labour problem. Recently, too, Yemenite Jews have been coming to Palestine, settling in the Colonies, and working as labourers; and the Zionists are already proclaiming that the Yemenites will build up the land. But this is another experiment on which judgment cannot yet be passed. Many people in Palestine think that the Yemenites are not physically strong enough for hard work; and, moreover, their level of culture and their mentality are so different from ours that the question inevitably presents itself whether an increase in their number will not change the whole character of the settlement, and whether the change will be for the better.

I have here touched only on the question of the possibility of "capturing labour." But an answer is still awaited to another question—whether it is proper for us, who are "bottom dog" everywhere, to aim at a monopoly of labour, and whether they are not right who maintain that this policy will prove to be our most serious obstacle.

effect between what they do and what they wish to attain. Between "practical work in Palestine" and "the redemption of the people and the land" this chain of causation may be imagined to exist by those who are at a distance; but in Palestine itself even imagination cannot find it. In Palestine the possibilities of practical work are too clear. It is possible to buy bits of land here and there; but it is not possible to redeem the land as a whole, or even most of it. It is possible to found beautiful Colonies on the "redeemed" land; but it is not possible to settle in them more than a very few *poor* Colonists. It is possible to produce in the Colonies an "upper-class" type of agriculturists, whose work is mostly done by others, and perhaps it is possible also to create a small labourer class for the finer kinds of work, which are comparatively easy and well paid; but it is not possible to create a real rural proletariat, capable of monopolising the rougher, more exacting, and worse-paid kinds of work, which alone can support a rural proletariat with its thousands and tens of thousands.¹

This being the case, we should expect every visitor to Palestine whose standard is that of the "home of refuge" to return home in grief and despair. Yet every day we find just the opposite. Orthodox Zionists, who wax grandiloquent at home about "the redemption of the people and the land," come to Palestine, see what there is to see there, and return home in joy and gladness, full of inspiration and enthusiasm, as though they had heard Messiah's trumpet from the Mount of Olives.

¹ In Petach-Tikvah, for instance, it is possible for three or four hundred labourers at most to earn a living by the finer kinds of work; whereas the unskilled labour employs at times thousands.

That is exactly my point. On the surface the Programme is supreme, and all its adherents seem really to believe that their work is bringing the redemption. But beneath the surface the unacknowledged instinct of national self-preservation is supreme, and it is that instinct that urges them on to work—not for the accomplishment of the Programme, but for the satisfaction of its own demands. When our orthodox Zionist comes to Palestine, and sees the work and its results, his whole being thrills with the feeling that it is a great and a noble thing that is being created there; that whether it leads to complete redemption or not, it will be an enormous force for our national preservation in all the countries over which we are scattered. Then the “redemption” idea finds its proper level: it becomes one of those cherished hopes which are not yet ready to be mainsprings of action; and the real object, the object which is actually being attained by practical work in Palestine, appears large and splendid enough in itself to provide inspiration and enthusiasm.

My respect for my readers and for myself does not permit me to explain once more in detail—after more than twenty years of explanation after explanation—what exactly is the object to which I allude here. But I think it no shame to avow that on this occasion I seemed to myself to see my dream of twenty years ago in process of realisation in Palestine, though naturally with differences of detail. What has already been accomplished in Palestine entitles one to say with confidence that that country will be “*a national spiritual centre of Judaism, to which all Jews will turn with affection, and which will bind all Jews together; a centre of study and learning, of language and literature, of*

bodily work and spiritual purification ; *a true miniature of the people of Israel as it ought to be . . .* so that every Hebrew in the Diaspora will think it a privilege to behold just once the 'centre of Judaism,' and when he returns home will say to his friends : 'If you wish to see *the genuine type of a Jew*, whether it be a Rabbi or a scholar or a writer, a farmer or an artist or a business man—then go to Palestine, and you will see it.' ”¹

No doubt the time has not yet come, nor will it soon come, when the traveller returned from Palestine, speaking of the “genuine type of a Jew,” can say to his friends, “Go to Palestine, and you will see it.” But he *can* say, and generally does, “Go to Palestine, and you will see it *in the making*.” The existing Colonies, although they depend mainly on non-Jewish labour, strike the Jew of the Diaspora as so many little generating stations, in which there is gradually being produced a new type of national life, unparalleled in the Exile. So soon as he enters a Jewish Colony, he feels that he is in a Hebrew national atmosphere. The whole social order, all the communal institutions, from the Council of the Colony to the school, bear the Hebrew stamp. They do not betray, as they do in the Diaspora, traces of that foreign influence which flows from an alien environment and distorts the pure Hebrew form. Of course, he does not find everything satisfactory and commendable. He discovers—if he has eyes to see—many defects in the communal life and in that of the individual. Even the schools in the Colonies are still for the most part very far from perfection ; and even the much-vaunted predominance of the Hebrew language

¹ [The quotation is from an Essay called *Dr. Pinsker and his Pamphlet*, written in 1892.]

in the Colonies is as yet but half complete—it extends only to the children. But everything—he tells himself—is still in its infancy; the process of free development has only just begun, and it is going on. Many of these defects will be remedied in time; and whatever is not remedied must be a defect in ourselves, with its roots in our national character. If we want to create a *genuine* Hebrew type, we must accept the bad with the good, provided that both alike belong *essentially* to the type, and that the type itself is not corrupted as in the Diaspora. The Jewish visitor travels from Colony to Colony, and finds them sometimes many hours' journey from one another, with alien fields and villages in between. But the intervening space seems to him nothing more than an empty desert, beyond which he reaches civilisation again, and breathes once more the refreshing atmosphere of Hebrew national life. Days pass, or weeks, and he seems to have spent all the time in another world—a world of the distant past or the distant future. When he leaves this world he says to himself, “If it is thus to-day, what will it be one day, when the Colonies are more numerous and fully developed?” At such a time he realises that here, in this country, is to be found the solution of the problem of our national existence; that from here the spirit shall go forth and breathe on the dry bones that are scattered east and west through all lands and all nations, and restore them to life.

But from this point of view the term “practical work” does not apply only to the agricultural colonies. This national Hebrew type may have, and indeed has, its generating stations outside the agricultural settlement. Many Zionists criticise the Directors of the National

Fund for sinking a good deal of their capital in the building of Jewish quarters in towns (such as Tel-Aviv in Jaffa). From the point of view of the Programme these critics are certainly right. The Fund was created for "the redemption of the land" in the widest sense of the term, and not for the purchase of small pieces of urban land, and the erection on them of houses for Jews. But, as I have said, the work is directed not by the demands of the Programme but by the promptings of an instinct. If our visitor from the Diaspora remains some days in Tel-Aviv, observes its life, and sees the Hebrew children who are growing up there, he will not criticise the National Fund for having made it possible to found such a generating station. He will wish with all his heart that the Directors would commit the same fault again, and create similar stations in the other towns of Palestine.

And need it be demonstrated that the Hebrew schools in Jaffa and Jerusalem are centres of unremitting activity in the creation of "the genuine type of a Jew"? This educational work, again, does not fit in very well with the Programme. "What use," it is often asked, "is there in educating the children in the national spirit, so long as the land is not redeemed, and the nation does not come to the land, and many of these very children may not remain there? To redeem the land, extend the settlement, capture labour—that is the way to realise the Programme. But education? When the number of Jews in Palestine is large, national education will follow as a matter of course. At present we have no right to use for spiritual purposes the resources which are needed for more important things." I doubt whether this criticism can be reasonably and logically

answered on the basis of the Programme. But what can logic do when instinct pulls the other way? The very men who promise to bring about the redemption by means of "practical work in Palestine" are using a great deal of their energy in educational work in the country; and Zionists generally value such work and turn to it more and more. To learn why, one has only to listen to the speeches at a Zionist meeting during a debate on "cultural work" in Palestine. The "redeemers" forget for a time the Programme, the "home of refuge," and all their other catchwords, and begin to extol "the revival of the spirit," and the creation of a new Hebrew type. They prophesy that this type will in future be a connecting link between all the scattered parts of the nation. They point to the beneficial influence already exerted by the schools in Palestine on education in the Diaspora. And so forth, and so forth.

Eighteen years ago I saw the beginnings of this educational work in Palestine, and I could not then bring myself to believe that the individual teachers who stood for the great ideal of a Hebrew education in the Hebrew language, and had begun to put it into practice with their limited resources, could really succeed in producing such a spiritual revolution. But at the same time I saw how bent they were on the attainment of their object, and how confident of success: and I said, "Who knows? Perhaps this confidence will be able to work miracles."¹ Now I have seen that confidence has indeed worked miracles. "A Hebrew education in the Hebrew language" is no longer an ideal in Palestine: it is a

¹ [From the Supplement to an Essay called *Truth from Palestine* (II), written in 1894.]

real thing, a natural, inevitable phenomenon; its disappearance is inconceivable. No doubt there are some scattered fortresses which have not yet been captured; but these, too, will surrender, as others have, to the demands of the age. Take, for instance, the educational institutions of the German *Hilfsverein* in Jerusalem, from the Kindergartens up to the Teachers' Seminary. All in all, they have sixteen hundred pupils of both sexes, and these are being trained—despite the still visible remnant of German education—in the Hebrew spirit and the Hebrew language. All who know how things used to be must confess that there has really been a revolution in Palestine, and that the Hebrew teacher has won.¹ Of course, there is still much to be done before the victory can be complete even internally—that is to say, before Hebrew education can find the right road in every department, and before its defects, which are still numerous, can be removed. But the conqueror has already shown his patience and his devotion to his ideal; and we can surely trust him not to rest until he has so perfected Hebrew education in Palestine as to make it a worthy model for Jews throughout the world, a standard type of national education, to which they will endeavour to approximate so far as the conditions of the Diaspora allow.

Yet another urban generating station of a different kind has been created of late years, also by the unbounded

¹ I cannot refrain from mentioning here a small incident which illustrates the present position excellently. I visited one of the classes of the *Hilfsverein* school at Jaffa during the German reading lesson. The pupils were puzzled by the word *aufheben*, and the teacher tried to explain it by German synonyms, which they equally failed to understand. At last the teacher's patience was exhausted, and he exclaimed angrily, in pure Sephardic pronunciation, "*levatell*!" All the pupils understood at once!

confidence of an individual; and the Zionists and the National Fund have not refrained from helping it and enabling it to live and to develop, although it is very difficult indeed to bring it within the scope of the Programme. I mean, of course, the Bezalel.¹ True, its great object—the development of Hebrew art—has so far been attained only to a slight extent, and it has not yet touched the higher branches of art. But its achievements in the domain of handicraft justify the belief that here also confidence will work miracles. Whatever may happen, the Bezalel has already become the source of a spiritual influence which makes itself felt in lands far distant from Palestine. Who can tell how many estranged hearts have been brought back to their people, in greater or less degree, by the beautiful carpets and ornaments of the Bezalel?

All these generating stations, whether in the country or in the cities, are welded together in our thought, and appear to us as a single national centre, which even now, in its infancy, exerts a visible and appreciable influence on the Diaspora. Hence a man need not believe in miracles in order to see with his mind's eye this centre growing in size, improving in character, and exerting an ever-increasing spiritual influence on our people, until at last it shall reach the goal set before it by the instinct of national self-preservation: to restore our national unity throughout the world through the restoration of our national culture in its historic home. This centre will not be even then a "secure home of refuge" for our people; but it will surely be a *home of healing for its spirit*.

And afterwards?

¹ [A Hebrew school of Arts and Crafts in Jerusalem.]

Ask no questions ! In our present state of spiritual disorganisation we have no idea of the volume of our national strength, nor of what it will be able to achieve when all its elements are united round a single centre, and quickened by a single strong and healthy spirit. The generations that are to come afterwards will know the measure of their power, and will adjust their actions to it. For us, we are not concerned with the hidden things of the distant future. Enough for us to know the things revealed, the things that are to be done by us and our children in a future that is near.

THE SUPREMACY OF REASON

(TO THE MEMORY OF MAIMONIDES)

(1904)

At last, after the lapse of seven hundred years,¹ the anniversary of Maimonides' death has been raised to the dignity of an important national day of memorial, and has been honoured throughout the Diaspora. In earlier centuries our ancestors do not appear to have remembered that so-and-so many hundred years had passed since the death of Maimonides; still less did they make the anniversary a public event, as we do now, although they were in much closer sympathy with Maimonides than we are—or, to be more correct, *because* they were in much closer sympathy with him than we are. They did not feel it necessary to commemorate the death of one whom in spirit they saw still living among them—one whose advice and instruction they sought every day in all their difficulties of theory and practice, as though he were still in their midst. In those days it was almost impossible for an educated Jew (and most Jews then were educated) to pass a single day without remembering Maimonides: just as it was impossible for him to pass a single day without remembering Zion. In whatever field of study the Jew might be engaged—in *halachah*,² in ethics, in religious or philosophical speculation—inevitably he found Maimonides in the place of

¹ [Maimonides died on the 13th December, 1204.]

² [Jewish Law.]

honour, an authority whose utterances were eagerly conned even by his opponents. And even if a man happened to be no student, at any rate he would say his prayers every day, and finish his morning prayer with the "Thirteen Articles": how then could he forget the man who formulated the Articles of the Jewish religion?

But how different it is to-day! If a Jew of that earlier time came to life again, and we wanted to bring home to him as forcibly as possible the distance between ourselves and our ancestors, it would be enough, I think, to tell him that nowadays one may spend a great deal of time in reading Hebrew articles and books without coming across a single reference to Maimonides. And the reason is not that we have satisfactory answers to all the spiritual questions which troubled our ancestors, and have therefore no need for the out-of-date philosophy of Maimonides. The reason is that the questions themselves are no longer on our agenda: because we are told that nowadays men of enlightenment are concerned not with spiritual questions, but only with politics and hard, concrete facts. If Maimonides in his day accepted the dictum of Aristotle that the sense of touch is a thing to be ashamed of, we in our day are prone to accept the dictum that "spirituality" is a thing to be ashamed of, and nothing is worth notice except what can be touched and felt. When, therefore, we were reminded this year that seven hundred years had elapsed since the death of the man with whom the spiritual life of our people has been bound up during all the intervening period, the fact made a profound impression throughout the length and breadth of Jewry. It was as though our people were quickened by this reminder, and

stirred suddenly to some vague yearning after the past—that past in which it was still capable (despite all the *Judennot*¹) of looking upwards and seeking answers to other questions than those of bread and a *Nachtsyl*.¹

Be that as it may, Maimonides has become the hero of the moment and a subject of general interest. Many an address has been delivered, many an article has been written in his honour this year; but nobody, so far as I have seen, has yet used the occasion to unearth, from beneath that heap of musty metaphysics which is so foreign to us, the central idea of Maimonides, and to show how there sprang from this central idea those views of his on religion and morality, which produced a long period of unstable equilibrium in Judaism, and have left a profound impression on the spiritual development of our people. Since none else has performed this task, I am minded to try my hand at it. If even those who are expert in Maimonides' system find here some new point of view, so much the better; if not, no harm is done. For my purpose is not to discover something new, but to rehearse old facts in an order and a style that seem to me to be new, and to be better adapted to present the subject intelligibly to modern men, who have not been brought up on medieval literature.

I

Can Maimonides claim to be regarded as the originator of a new system? This is a question which has exercised various authors; but we may leave it to those who attach importance to names. We may give Maimonides that title or not: but two facts are beyond dispute. On the

¹ [Allusion to well-known speeches at Zionist Congresses.]

one hand, the fundamental assumptions on which he built up his system were not his own, but were borrowed by him almost in their entirety from the philosophy of Aristotle as presented at second hand by the Arabs, who introduced into it a good deal of neo-Platonic doctrine. But, on the other hand, it is indisputable that Maimonides carried to their logical conclusion the ethical consequences of those assumptions, as the Greeks and the Arabs, with whom the assumptions originated, did not; and in this way he did say something that was new and hitherto unsaid, though it was logically implied in the fundamental principles which he took from other thinkers.

If, then, we would understand the ethical system of Maimonides, we must set clearly before our minds the metaphysical assumptions on which it was built. Those assumptions are so far removed from the philosophical and scientific conceptions of our own time that the modern man can scarcely grasp them. But in those days even the greatest thinkers believed these airy abstractions to be the solid truths of philosophy, rock-based on incontestable evidences. Hence it is not surprising that Maimonides, like the rest, was convinced beyond doubt that this "scientific" teaching was the uttermost limit of human understanding, and could never be changed or modified. So absolute, indeed, was his conviction that he went so far as to put this teaching in a dogmatic form, as though it had been a revelation from above.¹

The following is an outline of his dogmas, so far as is necessary for our purpose :

"All bodies beneath the firmament are compounded

¹ *Mishneh Torah, Foundations of the Law*, chaps. i.-iv.

of matter and form."¹ But "form" here is not "form as vulgarly understood, which is *the picture and image of the thing*"; it is "the natural form," that is to say, the reality of the thing, "that by virtue of which it is what it is," as distinct from other things which are not of its kind.²

"Matter is never *perceived* without form, nor form without matter; it is man who divides existing bodies in his consciousness, and *knows* that they are compounded of matter and form."³ For since the form is the reality, by virtue of which the thing is what it is, it follows that matter without form would be a thing without a real existence of its own: in other words, a mere intellectual abstraction. And it is superfluous to add that form without matter does not exist in the sublunar world, which consists wholly of "bodies."⁴

"The nature of matter is that form cannot *persist* in it, but it continually divests itself of one form and takes on another." It is because of this property of matter that things come into being and cease to be, whereas form by its nature does not desire change, and ceases to be only "on account of its connection with matter." Hence "*generic forms are all constant,*" though they exist in *individuals which change*, which come and go; but *individual forms necessarily perish*, since their existence is possible only in combination with finite matter.⁵

¹ *Ibid.*, chap. iv. 1.

² *Guide*, Part I., chap. i. [In rendering quotations from the *Moreh Nebuchim* (*Guide for the Perplexed*) the translator has used Dr. Friedländer's English version so far as possible.]

³ *Foundations of the Law*, *ibid.*, 7.

⁴ In the upper world Aristotle's philosophy postulates the existence of forms divorced from matter: they are the "separate Intelligences," which emanate one from another and are eternal (see *Foundations of the Law*, *ibid.*, and *Guide*, Part II., chap. iv.).

⁵ *Guide*, Part III., chap. viii.

“ The soul of all flesh is its form,” and the body is the matter in which this form clothes itself. “ When, therefore, the body, which is compounded of the elements, is dissolved, the soul perishes, because it exists only with the body” and has no permanent existence except *generically*, like other forms.¹

“ The soul is one, but it has many different faculties,” and therefore philosophers speak of parts of the soul. “ By this they do not mean that it is divisible as bodies are; they merely enumerate its different *faculties*.” The parts of the soul, in this sense, are five: the nutritive, the sensitive, the imaginative, the emotional, and the rational. The first four parts are common to man and to other animals, though “ each kind of animal has a particular soul ” special to itself, which functions in it in a particular way, so that, for instance, the emotion of a man is not like the emotion of an ass. But the essential superiority of the soul of man lies in its possession of the additional fifth part—the rational: this is “ that power in man by which he thinks and acquires knowledge and distinguishes between wrong actions and right.”²

Thus the soul of man differs from the souls of other living things only in the greater variety and higher quality of its functions. In essence it is, like “ the soul of all flesh,” simply a form associated with matter, having no existence apart from the body. When the body is resolved into its elements the soul also perishes with all its parts, *including the rational*.

This extreme conclusion had already been deduced from the teaching of Aristotle by some of his early com-

¹ *Foundations of the Law, ibid.*, 8 and 9.

² *Eight Chapters*, chap. i.

mentators (such as Alexander Aphrodisius). There were, indeed, other commentators who, unable to abandon belief in the survival of the soul, tried to explain Aristotle's words in conformity with that belief by excluding the rational part from the "natural form" and attributing to it a separate and eternal existence.¹ But Maimonides was too logical not to see the inconsistency involved in that interpretation; and so he sided with the extremists, though their view was absolutely opposed to that belief in personal immortality which in his day had come to be generally accepted by Jews. Had he been content with that view alone, he would inevitably have gone back to the conception of primitive Judaism, as we find it in the Pentateuch: that immortality belongs not to the individual, but to the nation; that the national form persists for ever, like the generic form in living things, and the changing individuals are its matter. In that case his whole ethical system would have been very different from what it is. But Maimonides supplemented the teaching of Aristotle by another idea, which he took from the Arabs; and this idea, amplified and completed, he made the basis of his ethical system, which thereby acquired a new and original character, distinguished by its fusion of the social and the individual elements.

The idea is in substance this: that while reason, which is present in a human being from birth, is only one of the faculties of the soul, which is a unity of all its parts and ceases wholly to exist when the body ceases, yet this faculty is no more than a "potential faculty," by virtue of which its possessor is able to apprehend ideas; and therefore its cessation is inevit-

¹ See Munk, *Le Guide des Égarés*, I., pp. 304-8 (note)

able only if it remains throughout its existence in its original condition—in the condition, that is, of a “potential faculty” whose potentiality has not been realised. But if a human being makes use of this faculty and attains to the actual apprehension of Ideas, then his intellect has proceeded from the stage of potentiality to that of actuality: it has achieved real existence, which is permanent and indestructible, like the existence of those Ideas which it has absorbed into itself and with which it has become one. Thus we are to distinguish between the “potential intellect,” which is given to a human being when he comes into the world, and is merely a function of the body, and the “acquired intellect,” which a human being wins for himself by apprehending the Ideas. This acquired intellect “is not a function of the body and is really separate from the body.” Hence it does not cease to exist with the cessation of the body; it persists for ever, like the other “separate Intelligences.”¹

Now since the form of every existing thing is that individual essence by virtue of which it is what it is and is distinguished from all other existing things, it is clear that the acquired intellect, which gives its possessor immortality, is the essence of the human being who has been privileged to acquire it: in other words, his true form, by which he is distinguished from the rest of mankind. In other men the form is the transient soul given to them at birth; but in him who has the acquired intellect even the soul itself is only a kind of matter. His essential form is “the higher knowledge,” “*the form*

¹ *Guide*, Part I., chaps lxx. and lxxii. and *passim*. For details see Munk (*ibid.*), and Dr. Scheyer’s monograph, *Das Psychologische System des Maimonides*, Frankfort a/M, 1845.

of the soul," which he has won for himself by assimilating "Ideas which are separate from matter."¹

Thus mankind is divided into two species, the difference between which is greater than that between mankind as a whole and other kinds of animals. For man is distinguished from the rest of animate nature only by having a distinctive form : in quality his form is like the forms of other living things, seeing that in his case as in theirs the individual form perishes. But the distinctive form of the man who has the acquired intellect is distinct in *quality* ; for it persists for ever even after its separation from matter. Its affinity is not with the other forms in the lower world, but with those "separate forms" in the world above.²

Thus far Maimonides followed the Arabs. But here the Arab philosophers stopped : they did not probe this idea further, did not carry it to its logical conclusions. Maimonides, on the contrary, refused to stop half-way ; he did not shrink from the extremest consequences of the idea.

First of all, he defined the content and the method of the intellectual process by which man attains to "acquired intellect." If we say that the intellect becomes actual and eternal by comprehending the Ideas and becoming one with them,³ it follows that the content of the Ideas themselves must be actual and eternal. For how could

¹ *Foundations of the Law*, chap. iv., 8, 9.

² There is some ground for thinking that Maimonides thought of the eternal existence after death of the possessors of "acquired intellect" not as personal, but as a common existence in which they are all united as a single separate being. See *Guide*, III., chap. xxvii., and *Foundations*, *ibid.*, and chap. ii., 5-6. This has been pointed out by Dr. Joel in *Die Religionsphilosophie des Mose ben Maimon*, Breslau, 1876 (p. 25, note).

³ *Guide*, I., chap. lxviii.

something real and eternal be created by the acquisition of something itself unreal or not eternal? Thus we exclude from the category of Ideas by the apprehension of which the acquired intellect is obtained: (1) those sciences which contain only abstract laws and not the explanation of real things, such as mathematics and logic; (2) those sciences which teach not what actually exists, but what ought to be done for the achievement of certain objects, such as ethics and æsthetics; (3) the knowledge of individual forms, which have only a temporary existence in combination with matter, such as the histories of famous men and the like. All knowledge of this kind, though it is useful and in some cases even necessary as preparation, is not in itself capable of making the intellect actual. What, then, are the Ideas by the apprehension of which the intellect does become actual? They are those whose content is true and eternal Being. This Being includes (going from lower to higher): (1) the generic forms of all things in the lower world, which are, as we know, constant; (2) the heavenly bodies, which, though compounded of matter and form, are eternal; (3) the forms which are free of matter (God and the separate Intelligences).¹ All this relates to the *content* of the intellectual process; but there is also a very important definition of its *method*—a definition which is implied in the conception itself. The result must be achieved *by the intellect's own activity*: that is to say, man must apprehend the truth of Being by rational proofs, and must not simply accept truth from others by an act of faith. For apprehension by this latter method is purely external; reason has had

¹ According to the division of the sciences current in those days, all this knowledge of true Being is contained in Physics and Metaphysics.

no active part in it, and therefore that union of the intellect with its object, which is what makes the intellect actual, is lacking.¹

And now let us see what are the ethical consequences of this idea.

The question of the *ultimate* purpose of the universe is for Maimonides an idle question, because it is not within our power to find a satisfactory answer. For whatever purpose we find, it is always possible to ask: What is the purpose of that purpose? And in the end we are bound to say: "God willed it so," or, "His wisdom decided so." But at the same time Maimonides agrees with Aristotle and his school that the *proximate* purpose of all that exists in this world of ours is man. For in that "course of genesis and destruction" which goes on in all the genera of existing things we see a kind of striving on the part of matter to attain to the most perfect form possible ("to produce the most perfect being that can be produced"); and since "man is the most perfect being formed of matter," it follows that "in this respect it can truly be said that all earthly things exist for man."²

Now if man is the proximate purpose of all things on earth, "we are compelled to inquire further, why man exists and what was the purpose of his creation."

¹ All this teaching is scattered up and down Maimonides' works, partly in explicit statements and partly in hints (see, e.g., *Guide*, III., chap. li.). Dr. Scheyer was the first to work out these definitions in detail (*ibid.*, chap. iii.). In general it must be remembered that Maimonides nowhere explains his whole system in logical order, and we are therefore compelled, if we would understand his system as it was conceived in his mind, to make use of scattered utterances, hints, and half-sentences written by the way, to explain obscure statements by others more precise, and to resort freely to inference.

² *Guide*, III., chap. xiii., and Introduction to *Commentary on the Mishnah*, section *Zera'im*.

Maimonides' view of the human soul being what it is, there is, of course, a ready answer to this question. The purpose of man's existence, like that of all material existence, is "to produce the most perfect being that can be produced": and what is the most perfect being if not the possessor of the "acquired intellect," who has attained the most perfect form possible to man? The purpose of man's life, then, is "to picture the Ideas in his soul." For "only wisdom can add to his inner strength and raise him from low to high estate; for he was a man potentially, and has now become a man actually, and man before he thinks and acquires knowledge is esteemed an animal."¹

But if this is so, can we still ask what is the highest moral duty and what is the most perfect moral good? Obviously, there is no higher moral duty than this: that man strive to fulfil that purpose for which he was created; and there is no more perfect moral good than the fulfilment of that purpose. All other human activities are only "to preserve man's existence, to the end that that one activity may be fulfilled."²

Here, then, we reach a new moral criterion and a complete "transvaluation of values" as regards human actions in their moral aspect. Every action has a moral value, whether positive or negative, only in so far as it helps or hinders man in his effort to fulfil the purpose of his being—the actualisation of his intellect. "Good" in the moral sense is all that helps to this end; "evil" is all that hinders. If we determine according to this view the positions of good actions in the ethical scale, we shall find that higher and lower have changed places.

¹ Introduction cited in last note.

² *Ibid.*

At the very top, of course, will stand that one activity which leads direct to the goal—the apprehension of eternal Being by rational proof: that is to say, the study of physics and metaphysics. Below this the scale bifurcates into the two main lines of study and action. In the sphere of study, mathematics and logic have special moral importance, because knowledge of these sciences is a necessary preliminary to the understanding of Being by rational proof. Below them come subjects which have a practical object (ethics, etc.): for the actions with which these subjects deal are themselves only means to the attainment of the supreme end, and therefore the study of these subjects is but a means to a means.¹ In the sphere of action, again, there are different degrees. Those human actions which have as their object the satisfaction of bodily needs have positive moral value only in a limited sense: in so far as they effectively keep off physical pain and mental distraction, and thus allow a man to give himself untroubled to the pursuit of the Ideas.² Above these are actions which are connected with “perfection of character,” because that perfection is necessary for the attainment of true wisdom. “For while man pursues after his lusts, and makes feeling master over intellect, and enslaves his reason to his passions, the divine power—that is, Reason—cannot become his.”³ Hence even perfection of character has no absolute moral value, any more than

¹ *Guide*, III., chap. li. Maimonides does not there emphasise the difference between practical studies on the one hand and mathematics and logic on the other, because this is not germane to his purpose at the moment. But the distinction is necessarily implied.

² *Guide*, III., chaps. xxvii. and liv.; *Hilchoth De'oth*, chaps. iii. and iv.

³ Introduction to *Zera'im*.

other things which appertain to practical life. The moral value of everything is determined by its relation to the fulfilment of the intellectual purpose, and by that alone.¹

Starting from this standpoint, Maimonides lays down the principle that virtue is "the mean which is equidistant from both extremes."² This principle is taken, of course, from Aristotle's doctrine of virtue. But Aristotle did not set up a higher moral criterion by reference to which the mean point could be determined in every case. For him all virtue was really but a code of good manners to which the polite Greek should conform, being enabled by his own good taste to fasten instinctively on the point equidistant from the ugliness of the two extremes. Not so Maimonides, the Jew. He made this principle the basis of morality in the true sense, because he coupled with it a formulation of the supreme moral end. This moral end, for which the virtues are a preparation,³ compels us and enables us to distinguish between the extremes and the mean. For the extremes, being apt to impair physical health or mental peace, prevent a man from fulfilling his intellectual function; the mean is that which helps him on his road.⁴

But with all this we have not yet a complete answer

¹ Maimonides' attitude to perfection of character is most clearly revealed by the fact that he calls it "bodily perfection," in contrast to "perfection of the soul," which is *intellectual* perfection (*Guide*, III., chap. xxvii.).

² See *Hilchoth De'oth*, chap. i.; *Eight Chapters*, chap. iv.

³ *Guide*, III., chap. liv.

⁴ See *Eight Chapters*, end of chap. iv. and beginning of chap. v. Lazarus (*Ethik des Judentums*, I., chap. xiv.) fails to notice this difference between Aristotle and Maimonides, and therefore finds it strange that Maimonides introduces Aristotle's doctrine of the mean into Jewish ethics.

to our question about the purpose of the existence of the human race as a whole. We know that the human race really consists of two different species : “potential man ” and “actual man.” The second species, indeed, does not come into existence from the start as an independent species, but is produced by development out of the first. But this development is a very long one, and depends on many conditions which are difficult of fulfilment, so that only a few men—sometimes only “one in a generation ”—are privileged to complete it, while the great majority of mankind remains always at the stage of “ potential man.” Thus the question remains : What is the purpose of the existence of the great mass of men “ who cannot picture the Idea in their souls ” ? For when we say that all material things exist for the sake of the existence of man, we do not mean that all other things are but a “ necessary evil,” an evil incidental to the production of the desired end—in other words, merely Nature’s unsuccessful experiments in her struggle towards “ the production of the most perfect being that can be produced,” like the many imperfect specimens of his art that the inexperienced artificer turns out before he succeeds in creating one that is perfect. We cannot so regard them in the face of the evidence that we have of the wonderful wisdom of creative nature, which proves that the Artificer can do his work in the way best fitted to achieve his object. We must therefore assume that “ things do not exist for nothing ” ; that Nature, in her progress towards the production of the most perfect being, has formed all other things for the benefit of that most perfect being, whether for food or “ for his advantage otherwise than by way of food,” in such a way that the sum-total of things in the inferior

world is not merely a ladder by which to ascend to the production of man, but also a means to secure the permanence of man when once he has been produced. It follows, therefore, that all the millions of men "who cannot picture the Idea in their souls" cannot be void of purpose, like the spoilt creations of the artist, which, not being suited to their object, are left lying about until they perish of themselves. There must of necessity be some advantage in their existence, as in that of the other kinds of created things. What, then, is this advantage? The answer is implied in the question. "Potential man," like other earthly things, exists without doubt for the benefit of the "perfect being," of "actual man." In conformity with this view Maimonides lays it down that "these men exist for two reasons. First, to serve the one man (the 'perfect') : for man has many wants, and Methuselah's life were not long enough to learn all the crafts whereof a man has absolute need for his living : and when should he find leisure to learn and to acquire wisdom? The rest of mankind, therefore, exists to set right those things that are necessary to them in the commonwealth, to the end that the Wise Man may find his needs provided for and that wisdom may spread. And secondly, the man without wisdom exists because the Wise are very few, and therefore the masses were created to make a society for the Wise, that they be not lonely."¹

Thus the existence of the majority of mankind has a purpose of its own, which is different from that of the existence of the chosen minority. This minority is an end in itself—it is the embodiment of the most perfect form in the inferior world ; whereas the purpose of the

¹ Introduction to *Zera'im*,

majority lies not in its own existence, but in the fact that it creates the conditions necessary to the existence of the minority : it creates, that is, human society with all its cultural possessions (in the material sense), without which it is impossible that wisdom should spread.

Thus we have introduced into ethics a new element—the social element.

For if each man could attain the degree of “ actual man ” without dependence on the help of human society for the provision of his needs, the moral criterion would be purely individual. Each man would be free to apply for himself the formula at which we arrived above :—all that helps me to fulfil my intellectual function is for me morally good ; all that hinders me is for me morally evil. But if the attainment of the supreme end is possible only for the few, and is possible for them only through the existence of the society of the many, which has for its function the creation of the conditions most favourable to the production of the perfect being : then we are confronted with a new moral criterion, social in character. All that helps towards the perfection of society in the manner required for the fulfilment of its function is morally good ; all that retards this development is morally evil. This moral criterion is binding for the minority and the majority alike. The majority, whose existence has no purpose beyond their participation in the work of society, can obviously have no other moral criterion than the social. But even the minority, though they are capable of attaining the supreme end, and have therefore an individualistic moral criterion, are none the less bound to subordinate themselves to the social criterion where the two are in conflict. For as society becomes more perfect, and the material basis

is provided with less expenditure of effort, so much the greater will be the possibility of producing the perfect being with more regularity and frequency. Hence from the point of view of the supreme end of the whole human race—and that is the source of moral duty—the well-being of society is more important than that of an individual man, even though he belong to the perfect few.¹

From this point of view all branches of man's work which further the perfection of society and the lightening of the burden of life's needs have a moral value, because they help more or less to create that environment which is necessary for the realisation of the most perfect form in the chosen few. Hence, to take one instance, Maimonides reckons the fine arts among the things that further the attainment of mankind's end (though naturally beauty has in his system no independent value): "for the soul grows weary and the mind is confused by the constant contemplation of ugly things, just as the body grows weary in doing heavy work, until it rest and be refreshed, and then it returns to its normal condition: so does the soul also need to take thought for the repose of the senses by contemplating pleasant things until its weariness is dispelled." Thus "the making of sculptures and pictures in buildings, vessels, and garments" is not "wasted work."²

To sum up: society stands between the two species of men and links them together. For the "actual man" society is a means to the attainment of his end;

¹ See *Guide*, III., chaps. xxvii., xxxiv. Maimonides is not explicit on the relation of the minority to social morality; but his view on this question is evident from what he says in the chapters quoted, and *passim*.

² *Eight Chapters*, chap. v.

for the "potential man" it is the purpose of his own being. The "potential man," then, being in himself but a transient thing, which comes into being and ceases to be, like all other living things, must content himself with the comforting knowledge that his fleeting existence is after all not wasted, because he is a limb of the social body which gives birth to the immortal perfect beings, and his work, in whatever sphere, helps to produce these perfect beings.

Thus Maimonides gets back to the view of early Judaism, which made the life of society the purpose of the life of the individual, although at first he seemed to diverge widely from it in setting up the one "perfect man," the possessor of "acquired intellect," as the sole end of the life of humanity at large.

It is possible, indeed, at first sight to find a certain resemblance between Maimonides' ethics and another doctrine which has recently gained such wide currency—the doctrine of Nietzsche. Both conceive the purpose of human existence to lie in the creation of the most perfect human type; and both make the majority a tool of that minority in which the supreme type is realised. But in fact the two doctrines are essentially different, and the resemblance is only external. In the first place, Nietzsche's Superman is quite unlike Maimonides' Superman in character. Nietzsche, Hellenic in spirit, finds the highest perfection in a perfect harmony of all bodily and spiritual excellences. But Maimonides, true to the spirit of Judaism, concentrates on one central point, and gives pre-eminence to a spiritual element—that of intellect. And secondly, the relation of his "actual man" to society is different from that of Nietzsche's Superman. The Superman seeks an outlet for

his powers in the world outside him; he strives to embody his will in action, and tolerates no obstacle in his path. He is therefore eternally at war with human society; for society puts a limit to his will and sets obstacles on his path by means of its moral laws, which have been framed not to suit his individual needs, but to suit the needs of the majority. Maimonides' "actual man," on the contrary, aims not at embodying his will in the external world, but at perfecting his form in his inner world. He demands nothing of society except that it satisfy his elementary wants, and so leave him at peace to pursue his inner perfection. He does not therefore regard society as his enemy. On the contrary, he sees in society an ally, without whose aid he cannot attain his end, and whose well-being will secure his own.

II

So far I have purposely refrained from bringing the religious element into the ethics of Maimonides, with the object of showing that he really based his view of human life on philosophy alone, and did not give way a single inch in order to effect a compromise between his philosophy and the religious ideas which were accepted by Jews in his time. None the less, there is no doubt that Maimonides was a religious man, and believed in the divinity of the Law of Moses: only his idea of the nature of religion, its function and its value, was a new one, and differed entirely from the accepted idea, because here also, in the sphere of religion itself, he remained faithful to those fundamental axioms on which he based his moral system.

Does philosophy leave any room for a belief in the

existence of a revealed religion—that is to say, in a Law given to men by God through a supernatural revelation of himself to one or to many individuals? This question turns on another: Is the existence of the world independent of time and external cause, or is it the result of a creative act of God, as the Pentateuch teaches? According to the first view, “everything in the Universe is the result of fixed laws, Nature does not change, and there is nothing supernatural.” There is therefore no room for revelation, which upsets the order of nature, and “the whole teaching of Scripture would be rejected.” But if the world is the result of a creative act, and nature is consequently nothing but a revelation of the divine will, made in such time and place as God’s wisdom decreed, then it is no longer impossible that the divine will should one day reveal itself a second time in a supernatural manner. Hence, “accepting the Creation, we find that . . . revelation is possible, and that every difficulty in this question is removed.” For if we ask: “Why has God inspired a certain person and not another? Why has he revealed his Law to one particular nation, and at one particular time?” and so forth—“We answer to all these questions: He willed it so; or, His wisdom decided so. Just as he created the world according to his will, at a certain time, in a certain form, and as we do not understand why his will or his wisdom decided upon that peculiar form, and upon that peculiar time, so we do not know why his will or his wisdom determined any of the things mentioned in the preceding questions.”¹

Maimonides gave much thought to the question of the creation of the world, and examined it from every side.

¹ *Guide*, II., chap. xxv.

He tried to ascertain whether there was anything conclusive in the evidences adduced by his predecessors in favour of the eternity of the world or of its creation; and he did not scruple to avow that if he had found a convincing proof of the eternity of the world he would not have rejected it out of respect for the *Torah*. But purely philosophic investigation led him to the conclusion that there was really no convincing proof one way or the other. Seeing then, he says, that "the eternity of the universe has not been demonstrated, there is no need to reject Scripture," and we may believe in the creation theory, which has "the authority of Prophecy," without any sin against our reason.¹

But when once we have adopted the creation theory, revelation becomes possible, and there is nothing to prevent our holding the belief which our nation has accepted throughout its history: that at a definite point in time the Law was given to our people from heaven through the instrumentality of the chief of the Prophets, who received a unique inspiration from the divine source, and was taught what to tell his people in the name of God.² It is not relevant (as we have seen above) to ask why this Law was given to us and not to others, at that

¹ *Guide*, II., chaps xxv. and xvi.

² Maimonides explains his views on the methods of divine revelation and the nature of prophecy in general, and of the prophecy of Moses in particular, in several places: especially in *Guide*, II., chaps. xxxii.-xlvi., and in *Mishneh Torah*, section *Foundations of the Law*, chap. vii. But for our present purpose we need not enter into these speculations. It suffices to say that here also he was true to his own system. The Prophet is for him the most perfect "actual man"; and the divine inspiration reaches the Prophet through that separate Intelligence ("active intellect") which is, according to the philosophical system adopted by Maimonides, charged with the guidance of the world and with the raising of all forms (including the form of the soul) from potentiality to actuality.

particular time and at no other. But it is relevant to ask what is the purpose of this Law and what benefit it was meant to produce. For it can scarcely be supposed that God would interfere with the order of nature for no advantage or object; and if we cannot understand the working of the divine wisdom in every detail, we must and we can form for ourselves some general conception of the object for which the divine teaching was given to us and the way in which it can help men to attain their end.¹

Now it is clear that the divine teaching, whether on its theoretical or on its practical side, cannot lead a man straight to his supreme goal—the raising of his intellect from potentiality to actuality. For this goal, as we know, is to be attained not by good actions, and not even by the *received* knowledge of truth, but only by the activity of the intellect itself, which must arrive at truth by the long road of scientific proof. And if religion cannot raise its followers to the stage of “actual man” in a direct way, we must conclude that its whole purpose is to prepare the instrument which is necessary for the attainment of that end: to wit, human society, which creates the environment of the “actual man.” The aim of religion, then, is “to regulate the soul and the body” of society at large, so as to make it capable of producing the greatest possible number of “actual men.” To this end religion must necessarily be popular: its teachings and prescriptions must be aimed not at the chosen few, who strive after ultimate perfection, but at the great mass of society. To this mass it must give, in the first place, true opinions in a form suited to the intelligence of the many; secondly, a code

¹ See *Guide*, III., xxvi.

of morals, individual and social, which makes for the health of society and the prosperity of its members; and thirdly, a code of religious observances intended to educate the many by keeping these true opinions and moral duties constantly before their minds.¹ In these three ways—the third of which is merely ancillary to the other two—religion aims at raising the cultural level of society, so as to make a clear road for the perfect individual: to provide him from the beginning of his life with an environment of correct opinions and good morals, and save him from the necessity of frittering away his strength in a twofold battle—against the evil conditions of a corrupt society, and against false opinions implanted in himself by that society. Religion is there to save him from this battle against corruption without and falsehood within: to secure that as soon as he shows the ability and the will to attain perfection he shall find favourable conditions prepared for him, and proceed towards his goal without let or hindrance.

This was how Maimonides conceived the function of the divine religion; this was how he was bound to conceive it, his philosophy being what it was. But as he was also persuaded by various reasoned proofs that the Law of Moses was the divine religion,² he could obviously have no doubt that this Law must contain on its theoretical side the “true opinions” (that is, those philosophical opinions which he considered true), albeit in popular form, and on its practical side a moral doctrine for the individual and for society which was adapted to the end desiderated by his philosophy, together with the form of religious observance best calculated to

¹ *Ibid.*, chaps. xxiii. and xxviii.; see also II., chaps. xxxiv. and xl.

² See *Guide*, II., chaps. xxxix. and xl.; and especially the *Iggereth Teman*.

educate society in the right opinions and the right morality.

It is at this point that Maimonides' task becomes difficult. Armed with this *a priori* judgment, he comes to close quarters with the *Torah* : and he finds that in many matters, both of theory and of practice, it is, if taken at its face value, diametrically opposed to what his pre-conceived ideas would lead him to expect. The beliefs embodied in the *Torah* seem to be directly opposed to the most fundamental philosophical truths of Maimonides' system ; the actions prescribed in the *Torah* contain much that it is difficult to reconcile with the social purpose of the divine religion as conceived by that system. What course, then, was open to Maimonides ? To compromise between philosophical and religious truth, as many had done before, was for him impossible. For every compromise means simply that both sides give way ; and how could Maimonides, with his conviction that the attainment of truth by means of proof is the end of human existence and the only way to eternal happiness, give up one jot of this truth for the sake of another truth, of inferior value inasmuch as it has come to us only through tradition ? Thus he has but one possible course. Necessity compels him to subdue religion absolutely to the demands of philosophy : in other words, to explain the words of the *Torah* throughout in conformity with the truth of philosophy, and to make the *Torah* fulfil in every part the function which philosophy imposes on it.

This necessity worked wonders. By dint of enormous labour Maimonides discovered various extraordinary ways of interpreting the *Torah* ; with wonderful skill he found support for his interpretations in words and

phrases scattered about the Scriptures and the Talmud ; until at last he succeeded in making religion what it had to be according to his belief.

This is not the place to explain Maimonides' methods of exegesis in detail. For us to-day they are but a sort of monument to the weakness of the written word in the face of a living psychological force which demands that "yes" shall become "no" and "no" be turned into "yes." This psychological force led Maimonides to turn the "living God" of the *Torah* into an abstract philosophical conception, empty of all content except a collection of negations ; to make the "Righteous Man" of Judaism a philosopher blessed with "acquired intellect" ; to transform the "future world" of the Talmud into the union of the acquired intellect with the "active intellect" ; to metamorphose the Biblical penalty of "cutting off" into the disappearance of the form when the matter is resolved : and so forth. All this he did in conformity with his "philosophic truth," of which he refused to change one atom.¹

So, too, with the practical side of religion. Only in a very roundabout way could practical religion be brought under the general principles which Maimonides deduced from his philosophy. The difficulty was especially great in the case of the laws of religious worship, many of which have no apparent educative value as a means of confirming true opinions and morality. But here also necessity did its work, and Maimonides managed to find educational "reasons" for all the religious laws, not excepting those which seem on the face of them actually to confirm false

¹ All this is explained in many passages throughout Maimonides' books, which are too numerous to be particularised.

opinions and to arouse inclinations opposed to morality—such as, for instance, sacrifices and the accompanying rites.¹ None the less, he was compelled after all his hard labour to lay down this strange axiom: that there is a reason for the commandments in a general way, but not for their details, these having been ordained only because there can be no universal without particulars of some kind or other.²

Maimonides had an easier task in bringing the moral laws of the *Torah* within his system. In themselves these laws demanded as a rule no heroic exegesis to show their utility for the social order: indeed, the *Torah* often emphasises this utility, which in any case is self-evident in most commandments of this class. But in arranging these commandments in order of moral value Maimonides was compelled to coerce religion by his characteristic methods into conformity with his system, according to which good actions—whether moral or religious—are of an inferior order, having no value except that of a necessary preparation of the individual and of society for the attainment of the supreme moral good, the perfection of intellect. This attitude of Maimonides towards moral actions, which we have met already as a philosophical postulate, is just as strongly maintained after such actions have been invested with a

¹ For the “reasons of the commandments” see *Guide*, III., chaps. xxvi.-xlix.

² For instance: there is a reason for sacrifices in general. “But we cannot say why one offering should be a lamb, whilst another is a ram; and why a fixed number of them should be brought. . . . You ask why must a lamb be sacrificed and not a ram? but the same question would be asked, why a ram had been commanded instead of a lamb, so long as one particular kind is required. The same is to be said as to the question why were seven lambs sacrificed and not eight; the same question might have been asked if there were eight.” *Guide*, III., chap. xxvi.

religious sanctity. Hence religion affects Maimonides' philosophical ethics only to this extent, that it makes all the observances of religious worship a moral duty, equal in value to the other moral duties, because religious worship is one way of leading mankind to the attainment of the supreme moral good in the chosen individuals.

What, then, is the "divine religion"—that is to say, the teaching of Judaism—according to the system of Maimonides?

On its theoretical side it is popular metaphysics, and on its practical side social ethics and pædagogics. It cannot bring man to his ultimate perfection; its whole function is to regulate society—that is, the masses—in accordance with the requirements of the perfect man. Hence religion is not above reason, but below it: just as the masses, for whom religion was made, are below the perfect man. Reason is the supreme judge; religion is absolutely subordinate to reason, and cannot abrogate one jot of its decisions. For God, who implanted the reasoning faculty in man, that by it he might attain truth and win eternal Being, could not at the same time demand of man that he believe in something opposed to that very truth which is attained by reason, and is the goal of his existence and the summit of his happiness. Even if a Prophet works miracles in heaven and earth, and requires us therefore to believe that there has been prophetically revealed to him some "divine" truth which is opposed to reason, we must not believe him nor "regard his signs." "For reason, which declares his testimony false, is more to be trusted than the eye which sees his signs."

¹ Introduction to *Zera'im*.

But all this does not detract from the general and eternal duty of observing in practice all the commandments of the divine religion. Religion, like nature, is a creation of God, in which the divine will is embodied in the form of immutable laws. And just as the laws of nature are eternal and universally valid, admitting of no exception, though their usefulness is only general, and "in some individual cases they cause injury as well," so also "the divine guidance contained in the *Torah* must be absolute and general," and does not suffer change or modification "according to the different conditions of persons and times." For the divine creation is "that which has the absolute perfection possible to its species"; and that which is absolutely perfect cannot be perfected by change or modification, but only made less perfect.¹ Religion, it is true, was given through a Prophet, who received the divine inspiration; but when once it had been given it was placed outside the scope of creation, and became, like Nature after its creation, something independent, with laws which can be investigated and understood by the function of reason, but cannot be changed or abrogated by the function of prophecy. It may happen, indeed, that in accordance with the divine will, which was made an element in the nature of things when nature was created, the Prophet can change the order of the universe in some particular detail for a moment, so as to give a sign of the truth of his prophecy;² and similarly the Prophet can sometimes abrogate temporarily some point of the Law, to meet some special need of the time. But just as the Prophet cannot modify or change completely any law of nature,

¹ *Guide*, II., chap. xxxix., and III., chap. xxxiv.

² See *Guide*, II., chap. xxix.; *Eight Chapters*, chap. viii.

so he cannot modify or change completely any law of the *Torah*. Nor can he, by his function of prophecy, decide between opposing views on a matter which is capable of different interpretations, because his opinion on a question of this kind is important by virtue of his being a wise man, and not by virtue of his being a Prophet, and it is therefore no more decisive than that of another wise man who is not a Prophet. And “if a thousand Prophets, all equal to Elijah and Elisha, held one view, and a thousand and one wise men held the opposite view, we should have to follow the majority and decide according to the thousand and one wise men and not according to the thousand venerable Prophets.” For “God has not permitted us to learn from Prophets, but from wise men of reasoning power and knowledge.”¹

What I have said so far, in this section and the preceding one, is sufficient, I think, to give a clear idea of the fundamental beliefs of Maimonides as to the function of man and his moral and religious duties. But before we pass on to consider how Maimonides tried to make these ideas the common property of his people, and what mark his system has left on the development of Judaism, it is worth while to mention here that Maimonides himself has given us the essence of his system in a perfectly unmistakable form, by dividing men into various classes according to their position on the scale of perfection. He compares the striving of man after the perfection of his form to the striving of a king's subjects “to be with the king in his palace”; and using this simile he finds in mankind six successive stages, as follows :—

¹ Introduction to *Zera'im*; see also *Foundations of the Law*, chaps. ix. and x.

1. Men who are outside the country altogether—that is, savages “who have no religion, neither one based on speculation, nor one received by tradition.” They are considered “as speechless animals.”

2. Men “who are in the country,” but “have their backs turned towards the king’s palace, and their faces in another direction.” These are “those who possess religion, belief and thought, but happen to hold false doctrines, which they either adopted in consequence of great mistakes made in their own speculations, or received from others who misled them. Because of these doctrines they recede more and more from the royal palace the more they seem to proceed. These are worse than the first class, and under certain circumstances it may become necessary to slay them, and to extirpate their doctrines, in order that others should not be misled.”

3. “Those who desire to arrive at the palace, and to enter it, but have never yet seen it.” These are “the mass of religious people; the multitude that observe the divine commandments, but are ignorant.”

4. “Those who reach the palace, and go round about in search of the entrance gate.” These are “those who believe traditionally in true principles of faith, and learn the practical worship of God, but are not trained in philosophical treatment of the principles of the *Torah*.” On the same level with them are those who “are engaged in studying the Mathematical Sciences and Logic.”

5. Those who “have come into the ante-chamber”—that is, “those who undertake to investigate the principles of religion,” or those who have “learnt to understand Physics.”

6. Those who have reached the highest stage, that of being "with the king in the same palace." These are they "who have mastered Metaphysics—who have succeeded in finding a proof for everything that can be proved—who have a true knowledge of God, so far as true knowledge can be attained, and are near to the truth wherever only an approach to the truth is possible."¹

In this classification Maimonides sets forth his ethical system in plain terms, with perfect coldness and calm, as though there were nothing startling about it. We of the present day feel our moral sense particularly outraged by his cruel treatment of the second class—"those who happen to hold false doctrines"—though we can understand that a logical thinker like Maimonides, who always went the whole length of his convictions, was bound to draw this conclusion from his philosophical system. For that system regards "true opinions" as something much more than "opinions": it attributes to them the wonderful power of turning the reasoning faculty into a separate and eternal being, and sees therefore in the opposite opinions a danger to life in the most real sense. But in Maimonides' day the persecution of men for holding false opinions was a common thing (though it was done in the name of religion, not of philosophy); and even this piece of philosophic ruthlessness created no stir and aroused no contemporary protest. What did stir contemporary feeling to its depths was another conclusion involved in his classification: namely, "that philosophers who occupy themselves with physics and metaphysics are on a higher plane than men who occupy themselves with the

¹ *Guide*, III., chap. li.

Torah.”¹ Whoever knows in what esteem our ancestors of that period held the study of the *Torah* will not be surprised that “many wise men and Rabbis” were driven to the conclusion that “this chapter was not written by the Master, or if it was, it should be suppressed, or, best of all, burnt.”²

Poor, simple men! They did not see that this chapter could not be either suppressed or burnt except in company with all the other chapters of Maimonides’ system, which led him inevitably to this extreme conclusion. But there were other men in Israel who saw more clearly, and actually condemned all the chapters to the fire. To them we shall return later.

III

The supremacy of Reason! Can we to-day, after the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, conceive how tremendous, how fundamental a revolution the phrase implied in the time of Maimonides?

We all know that the outstanding characteristic of the human mind in the Middle Ages was its negative attitude to human reason, its lack of faith in the power of reason to direct man’s life and bring him to the goal of real happiness. Reason was almost hated and despised as a dangerous tempter and seducer: it led men away from the pursuit of truth and goodness, and was to be eschewed by all who cared for their souls. Fundamental questions about life and the universe had to receive *super-rational* answers. The simpler and more reasonable the answer, the more suspect and the less satis-

¹ Sec R. Shem-Tob’s Commentary on the *Guide*, *loc. cit.*

² *Ibid.*

factory it was; the stranger the answer, the more violently opposed to sane reason, the more cordial was its welcome and the more ready its acceptance. The famous *Credo quia absurdum* of one of the Church fathers was the cardinal rule of thought for all cultured nations, Christian and Mohammedan alike. Nor had Judaism escaped the sway of this principle. Not only the mass of the people, but the leaders and teachers, generally speaking, believed in the literal sense of the Scriptures and the Talmud, even where it was plainly contrary to reason. The coarsest and crudest ideas about the nature of the divine power and its relation to men, and about the soul of man and its future in "the world to come"—ideas which reason cannot tolerate for a moment—were almost universally held; and even those learned in the Law staunchly maintained these ideas, because so they had found it written in Bible or Talmud, and that which was written was above reason, and no attention should be paid to that impudent scoffer. It followed naturally from this fundamental point of view that the important things in the sphere of morals were to know and to perform all that was written. The function of reason was not to understand life and the universe, but to understand what was written about life and the universe. The thing best worth doing for a Jew was to ponder on the written word and to work out its details, theoretically and practically, to infinity.¹

No doubt some Jewish teachers before Maimonides had tried to introduce into Judaism more rational principles, which they had derived from Arabic philosophy. But these attempts only affected details; the cardinal

¹ Maimonides himself describes the contemporary state of culture among his people in several places. See, for instance, the *Treatise on Resurrection*.

principle remained untouched. Reason remained subordinate to the written word ; its truths were still discarded for the higher truth of religion. The Gaon Saadiah, the greatest of the earlier Jewish religious philosophers, explains the relation of reason to religion by the following simile : " A man weighs his money, and finds that he has a thousand pieces." He gives different sums to a number of people, and then, " wishing to show them quickly how much he has left, he says that he has five hundred pieces, and offers to prove it by weighing his money. When he weighs the money—which takes little time—and finds that it amounts to five hundred pieces they are bound to believe what he told them." But there may be among them a particularly cautious man, who wants to find the amount left over by the method of calculation—that is, by adding together the various amounts distributed and subtracting their sum from the original amount.¹ Religion, of course, is the weighing process, which gives us the truth at once, by a method which is direct and cannot be questioned. Reason corresponds to calculation : a cautious man with plenty of time may use it to establish a truth which has already been proved to him by the short and certain method of weighing. But obviously calculation cannot change the result which weighing has already given ; and if there is any difference in the results, the weighed money will neither be increased nor diminished, and the mistake must be in the calculation. This way of regarding reason and its relation to religion was common to all the Jewish thinkers who laboured, before Maimonides, to reconcile religion and philosophy. They regarded their labour only as a necessary evil.

¹ *Emunoth v' Deoth*, Preface.

They shouldered the burden because they saw that it had to be done ; but in their heart of hearts they were wholly on the side of religion, and it never occurred to them to give reason precedence.¹ In this respect they were like the Arabic religious philosophers ; and like them they chose the philosophical views which confirmed their religious faith rather than those which were confirmed by reason. “ They did not investigate,” writes Maimonides, jeering at “ philosophers ” of this kind, “ the real properties of things ; first of all they considered what must be the properties of the things which should yield proof for or against a certain creed.” They forgot “ that the properties of things cannot adapt themselves to our opinions, but our opinions must be adapted to the existing properties.”²

If we remember that this was the general attitude of mind, we cannot help asking how it could happen that in such a period and in such an atmosphere Maimonides arrived at the doctrine of the supremacy of reason in its most uncompromising form. No doubt, if we care to be satisfied with any answer that comes to hand, we may say that Maimonides, starting out with a predisposition in favour of the Arabic version of the Aristotelian philosophy, and a sternly logical mind, could not stop half-way, or fail to see the logical consequences of Aristotelianism. But when we observe how, with a devotion far greater than that of his non-Jewish teachers, he set himself to develop and extend the idea of the

¹ R. Jehudah Halevi, despite his profound knowledge of contemporary philosophy, says categorically : “ He who accepts this [the Law] completely, without scrutiny or argument, is better off than he who investigates and analyses ” (*Cuzri*, II., xxvi. [Dr. Hirschfeld's translation]).

² *Guide*, I., chap. lxxi.

supremacy of reason till it became a complete, all-embracing theory of life; and when we remember also his love for the teachings of Judaism, which ought to have induced in him a disposition not to extend the empire of reason, but to restrict it: we are forced to confess that logic alone could never have produced this phenomenon. There must have been some psychological force, some inner motive power, to make Maimonides so extreme and uncompromising a champion of reason.

We shall discover what this motive power was, I think, if we take account of the political position of the Jews at that time.

It was a time when religious fanaticism was rife among the Moslems. In many countries to profess another religion meant death, and large numbers of Jews, who could with difficulty change their place of abode, accepted Mohammedanism, though but outwardly. One of these countries was Southern Spain, the birth-place of Maimonides, who was a boy of thirteen when religious persecution broke out in that country. It may or may not be true, as recent historians maintain, that he and his father and the whole family changed their religion under compulsion: the question has not yet been definitely settled. But there is no doubt that even if he was saved by some means from an open change of faith, he was at any rate forced to conceal his Judaism, for fear of oppression, so long as he lived in Spain and in Fez (where religious persecution first started, and fanaticism had its stronghold). It was only in Egypt that his troubles ceased, and when he reached Egypt he was already about thirty years of age. This, then, was the terrible position in which Maimonides spent his years of development. He was surrounded by lying

and religious hypocrisy ; Judaism had to hide from the light of day ; its adherents had to wear a mask whenever they came out of their homes into the open. And why ? Because Mohammed had called himself a prophet, had performed miracles, according to his followers, to win their faith, and by virtue of his prophetic power had promulgated a new Law and revealed new truths, which all men were bound to believe, although they were contrary to reason. This state of things was bound to make a profound impression on a young man like Maimonides, with his fine nature and his devotion to truth. He could not but feel every moment the tragedy of such a life ; and therefore he could not but become violently opposed to the source of religious fanaticism—to that blind faith in the truth of prophecy which relies on supernatural “ evidence,” and despises the evidence of reason. It was this blind faith that led the Moslems to force the Jews into accepting the teaching of the new prophet ; and it was this that led many of these very Jews, after they had gradually become accustomed to their new situation, to doubt of their Judaism and ask themselves why they should not be able to believe in Mohammed’s prophecy, just as they believed in that of Moses. If Moses had performed miracles, then surely Mohammed might have done the same ; and how could they decide between the one teaching and the other with such certainty as to pronounce one true and the other false ?¹

These impressions, which were constantly influencing Maimonides’ development in his childhood and youth,

¹ As to the state of mind of the forced converts at that time see what Maimonides says in the *Treatise of the Sanctification of the Name* and the *Iggereth Teman*.

were bound to swing him violently over to the other side, to the side of reason. Ultimately he was led to subject man—and God too, if one may say so—to that supreme ruler: because Judaism could trust reason never to allow any new prophet with his new teaching to work it harm. When once Judaism had accepted the supremacy of reason and handed over to reason the seal of truth, it would never again be difficult to show by rational proof that the first divine religion was also the only divine religion, never to be displaced or altered till the end of time; and then, even if ten thousand prophets like Mohammed came and performed miracles beyond telling, we should never believe in their new teaching, because one proof of reason is stronger than all the proofs of prophecy.¹

Perhaps, too, Maimonides' rationalism is traceable to yet another cause, which lies like the first in the situation of the forced converts of that period. These men were no doubt able to observe the Jewish law within their own homes; the Moslems did not, like the Christians later, invent an Inquisition to pry into every hole and corner. None the less, Maimonides himself makes it clear that the Jews were often compelled to break the commandments of their Law, when they could not observe them without arousing suspicion in the minds of the authorities. This naturally caused the unfortunate Jews great distress, and drove some of them to despair. What, they asked themselves, was the use of

¹ See Section II. above. Note especially what Maimonides says about prophecy in the Introduction to his *Commentary on the Mishnah* (written at the time when he lived among the forced converts). Some of this is quoted in Section II. He writes there with such incisive force as to make it clear that he has left the realm of pure speculation and theory, and has a practical object connected with actual circumstances which had stirred him deeply at the time.

remaining true to their ancestral faith at heart, if they could not in practice keep clear of transgressions both great and small, and must in any case merit the pains of hell?¹ It is reasonable, therefore, to suppose that this painful feeling also helped to lead Maimonides—though unconsciously—towards the doctrine of the supremacy of reason, which teaches that man's "ultimate perfection does not include any action or good conduct, but only knowledge"²—thus implying that man may win salvation by attaining to true opinions, though he is sometimes forced in practice to transgress the commands of religion.

However that may be, whether for these reasons or for others, we do find that Maimonides had his system perfected and arranged in all its details even in his early days, when he first came out of his study into public life, and that he made scarcely any change in it from that time till the day of his death.³ All his efforts went to the propagation of his teaching among his people, and to the endeavour to repair by its means all the shortcomings which he found in contemporary Judaism.

These shortcomings were great indeed. Judaism, as Maimonides found it, was by no means fulfilling its function as "the divine religion." It was not "true opinions" that the people derived from Judaism: on the contrary, they had come, through a literal acceptance of all that it taught, to hold false ideas about God and man, and had therefore by its means been removed

¹ All this is clearly hinted in Maimonides' *Treatise of the Sanctification of the Name*.

² *Guide*, III., chap. xxvii.

³ We find all the principles of his system in the Introduction to his first book (the *Commentary on the Mishnah*), and again at the end of his last book (*Guide*, III., chap. li.).

still further from perfection. Even the practical duties of morality and religion could not easily be learnt by the people generally from their religious writings. For in order to deduce practice from theory it was necessary to navigate the great ocean of the Talmud, and to spend years on minute and tangled controversies—a task for the few only, not for the masses. Here, then, was an odd state of things. The whole purpose of religion was to improve society at large, to speak to the masses in a language which they understood ; but if the masses could not understand the language of religion, and could learn from it neither true opinions nor practical duties, then religion was not fulfilling its function in society, and its existence was useless.

This state of affairs produced in Maimonides, while he was still young, an ardent desire to stand in the breach and make Judaism fit to fulfil the double function—theoretical and practical—which it had as the only “divine religion.” For this purpose it was necessary on the one hand to show the whole people, in a form suited to its comprehension, the “true opinions” contained in the *Torah*, and on the other hand to rescue the practical commandments from the ocean of Talmudic disputation and to teach them in a short and simple manner, so that they should be easily remembered and become familiar to the people.

But in those early days Maimonides had not the courage to strike out a new line and to present the whole content of religion in an entirely fresh manner in conformity with his philosophical system. Hence he chose a line which was already familiar, and decided to supply the need of his own age by the help of a book which in its time had been intended to fulfil a somewhat similar

purpose—the Mishnah. Thus it was in the form of a Commentary on the Mishnah that he tried to give his contemporaries what they lacked : to wit, clear doctrine and a plain rule of practice. Wherever the Mishnah leaves a point in doubt, he gives the decision laid down in the Talmud ; and wherever the Mishnah hints at some theoretical opinion, he takes advantage of the opportunity to explain the “ true opinions.”¹ This latter process was, of course, especially important to him ; and he sometimes expatiates on the subject at much greater length than is usual in a Commentary of the ordinary kind.² Thus he was able to introduce into his Commentary, besides a mass of scattered notes, complete essays on questions of faith and philosophy in the form of Introductions to different sections of the Mishnah.³

Maimonides gave a great deal of work to this Commentary, which he began and finished in his years of trouble and wandering. In the result he produced a masterpiece, which remains to this day superior to all later Commentaries on the Mishnah. But he did not achieve the principal object for which he took so much trouble : he did not make religion effective. His Commentary did not become widely known, and made no great impression ; still less did it bring about a revolution in popular opinion, as its author hoped that it would. And it failed of its object on the practical as

¹ See Introduction to *Commentary on the Mishnah*.

² “ This is not the place to treat of this matter ; but it is my intention, wherever a matter of belief is mentioned, to explain it briefly. For I love to teach nothing so much as one of the principles of religion ” (end of *Berachoth*).

³ Especially important in this connection are the Introductions to *Zera'im*, to chapter *Chelek* (where he brings in all the principles of religion), and to *Aboth* (*Eight Chapters*).

well as on the theoretical side. Many of the later laws, which have no basis in the Mishnah, could not be included in it; and those that were included were scattered about in no proper order, because the Mishnah itself has no strict order.

But as Maimonides grew older and reached middle life, years brought him wider knowledge and greater confidence in himself. This self-confidence gave him courage and decided him to approach his goal by another road. He would produce a work of striking originality, such as no Jew had ever produced before.

So he set to work on his *Mishneh Torah*. Instead of a Commentary on the Mishnah of R. Jehudah, Maimonides now produced a Mishnah of his own, new in content as in arrangement.¹ Here he sets forth all the practical laws of religion and morality and all the "true opinions" in the form best adapted to the understanding of ordinary men, in beautiful and clear language and in perfect logical order. Everything is put in its right place; decisions are given without hair-splitting arguments; opinions are set out untrammelled by arguments or proofs. In a word, the book presents all that the divine religion ought to give in order to fulfil its function, and presents it in precisely the right manner.²

¹ His Preface makes it clear that he regarded his book as a sort of Mishnah in a new form; and it seems (though he does not say it in so many words) that he intended to hint at this idea by the title of the book—*Mishneh Torah*.

² There were many writers who suspected that Maimonides' idea was to do away altogether with the study of the Talmud. But this suspicion could arise only from failure to understand clearly the real purpose of the book. Even theories are presented here in dogmatic form; but could it possibly be imagined that Maimonides wanted to do away with the study of philosophy by the long method of argument and proof—that study which he regarded as the purpose of the

This time Maimonides was justified in supposing that he had fulfilled his duty to his people and his religion, and had attained the end which he had set before himself. Within a short time this great book spread through the length and breadth of Jewry, and helped considerably not only to make the practical commandments more widely known, but also to purify and transform popular religious notions. Views distinguished by their freedom and their antagonism to current religious ideas appeared here in the innocent guise of canonical dicta; and as they were couched in the language of the Mishnah and in the familiar terminology of the old religious literature, people did not realise how far they were being carried, but swallowed the new ideas almost without resistance. If the dose was accepted not as pure philosophy, but as religious dogma, that was precisely what Maimonides intended: for according to his system religion was to teach philosophical truth to the masses in the guise of "divine" truth which needed no proof.

But Maimonides' work was not yet completed. In the *Misnheh Torah* he had reformed religion so far as its social function was concerned: that is to say, so far as the needs of the common people demanded. He had still to reform it from the point of view of the function of society itself: that is to say, to meet the needs of the chosen few. For the common people it was necessary to clothe philosophical truth in religious garb; for the

human race? The truth is that he had in view the social function of religion, and for this reason he set forth both theories and practical commands in brief and in a manner suited to the comprehension of ordinary men. He left it to the chosen few to study the principles of both the theoretical and the practical law, and to obtain from the original sources a knowledge of the reasons for both.

few it was necessary to do just the reverse—to discover and expose the philosophical truth that lay beneath the religious garb. For this minority, consisting of those whom “human reason had attracted to abide within its sphere”—who had learnt and understood the prevailing philosophy of the time with all its preambles and its proofs—could not help seeing the deep gulf between philosophy and Judaism in its literal acceptance. It was impossible to hide the inner contradiction from such men by means of a superficial gloss, or to harmonise discrepancies of detail by a generalisation. What then should one of these men do if he were not only a philosopher, but also “a religious man who has been trained to believe in the truth of our Law”? He must always be in a state of “perplexity and anxiety.” “If he be guided solely by reason . . . he would consider that he had rejected the fundamental principles of the Law; . . . and if, instead of following his reason, he abandon its guidance altogether, it would still appear that his religious convictions had caused him loss and injury. For he would then be left with those errors [*i.e.*, those derived from a literal interpretation of Scripture], and would be a prey to fear and anxiety, constant grief and great perplexity.”¹

If we remember Maimonides’ conception of the “actualisation” of intellect, and how it obtains independent existence through understanding the Ideas, we shall see that he was bound to regard this perplexity of the “perfect individuals” as being in itself not merely something undesirable, but a grave danger from the point of view of the supreme end of mankind. For how could these perplexed men attain to the summit of per-

¹ *Guide*, Introduction.

fection, to "acquired intellect," if they doubted the truth of reason because it did not square with the truths of religion, with the result that subject and object could not be united in them and become a single, indivisible whole? If the divine teaching itself brings "loss and injury" to the chosen few, the harm that it does more than outweighs the good that it has done in improving the multitude and thus removing social obstacles from the path of the few.

This grave evil required a remedy; the "perplexed" had to be satisfied that they could devote themselves peacefully to the acquisition of the Ideas, without being disturbed by the thought that in so doing they were rejecting the fundamental principles of the Law. This was the task which Maimonides set himself in his last book, the *Guide for the Perplexed*. The book is in a way his own confession of faith; it shows his perplexed pupils the method by which he has succeeded in escaping from his own perplexity. After what has been said above, we need not here deal with this book at length. The "true opinions" which it contains have already been explained in outline; the method by which these opinions are discovered in the *Torah* has been broadly indicated, and the details are not essential to our present purpose. It does not matter to us *how* Maimonides subordinated religion to reason; the important thing is that he did subordinate it. From this point of view we may put the whole teaching of the *Guide* in a single sentence. "Follow reason and reason only," he tells the "perplexed," "and explain religion in conformity with reason: for reason is the goal of mankind, and religion is only a means to the end."

Had Maimonides written the *Guide* before he wrote

the *Mishneh Torah*, he would certainly have been pronounced a heretic, and his book would have made no deep impression either in the orthodox camp or in that of the doubters. The orthodox would have turned their backs on it and have striven to blot out its memory, as they did with so many other books which they thought dangerous to their faith; and the doubters would not have accepted its views as a perfect doctrine, but would have regarded it as merely an attempt on the part of one of their fellow-doubters to escape from his perplexity, and an attempt which in many details had failed and could not give entire satisfaction.

But in fact the *Guide* was written after the *Mishneh Torah*, when Maimonides was already considered the greatest exponent of the Law, and enjoyed an unequalled reputation throughout the Diaspora. Hence even the *Guide* could not dethrone him from his eminence. Willingly or unwillingly, his contemporaries accepted this further gift at his hands. The believers stormed and raged among themselves, but did not dare to attack Maimonides openly so long as he lived. The doubters welcomed the book with open arms; they did not stop to test or criticise, but drank eagerly of the comforting draught for which their souls had been thirsting. It was not some sophist, but the greatest sage in Israel, the light of the Exile, who went before them like a pillar of fire to illumine their path. How could they but be satisfied with such a guide?

But things changed when Maimonides' death freed the zealots from the restraint of fear. A fierce conflict broke out about him, and raged for a hundred years. The religious leaders, long accustomed to ban every book that did not suit their views, could not possess their

souls in silence when they saw, for the first time in Jewish history, that revolutionary books like the *Guide* and the *Book of Science* were spread abroad without let or hindrance, and were more popular and more esteemed by the people at large than almost any of the other books which the teachers and sages of Israel had placed in the treasury of Judaism.¹ The details of this conflict are familiar to scholars, and it is not my intention here to write the history of that period. But it is worth pointing out that most of Maimonides' opponents at that time did not recognise clearly the fundamental change which he had introduced into Judaism. No doubt they all felt that his teaching meant a complete revolution in the national outlook; but they did not all understand what was the pivotal issue of the revolution. For the most part they merely pointed to certain details in which they found heresy, such as the denial of resurrection, of hell and paradise, and so forth. Only a few of them understood that Maimonides' teaching was revolutionary not because of his attitude on this or that particular question, but because he dethroned religion altogether from the supreme judgment-seat, and put reason in its place: because he made it his basic principle that "whenever a Scripture is contradicted by proof we do not accept the Scripture," but *explain* it in accordance with reason.²

This emancipation of reason from its subordination to an external authority is the great and eternal achieve-

¹ After the publication of the *Guide* many people discovered that its opinions were already contained in the innocent-looking dicta of the *Mishneh Torah*, especially in its first part (*The Book of Science*), and from that time onward they regarded that book also as heretical, and waged war on it as well as on the *Guide*.

² See the letter of R. Jehudah Alfachar to Kimchi: *Collected Responses of Maimonides* (ed. Leipsic), Part III., p. 1, *et seq.*

ment which has so endeared Maimonides to all those of our people who have striven after knowledge and the light. The theoretical system at which Maimonides worked so hard from his youth to the end of his life has long been swept away, together with the Arabic metaphysics on which it was based. But the practical consequence of that system—the emancipation of reason—remains, and has left its mark on the history of Jewish thought up to the present day. Every Jew who has left the old school and traversed the hard and bitter road that leads from blind faith to free reason must have met with Maimonides at the beginning of his journey, and must have found in him a source of strength and support for his first steps, which are the hardest and the most dangerous. This road was traversed not only by Mendelssohn, but also by Spinoza,¹ and before and after them by countless thinkers, many of whom won golden reputations within Judaism or outside it.

S. D. Luzzatto's criticism of Maimonides, on the ground that his views on the nature of the soul led to the degradation of reason in Jewish thought, is superficial. Maimonides, according to him, "laid down what we must believe and what we must not believe," whereas before his time there was no rigid dogma, "and there was no ban on opinions to prevent each thinker from believing what he thought true."² Now this is not the place to show how far Luzzatto was from historical accuracy when he credited pre-Maimonidean Judaism with freedom of thought. To understand the true nature of that freedom we need only remember how

¹ See Dr. Joel's monograph, *Spinoza's Theologisch-Politischer Traktat auf seine Quellen geprüft*, Breslau, 1870.

² See *Kerem Chemed*, III., pp. 67-70.

Maimonides' opponents—who were certainly faithful to the older Judaism—spoke and acted in the period of conflict. But as regards Maimonides himself, Luzzatto overlooks the fact that, while his psychological theory no doubt led him to regard certain opinions as obligatory, he placed the source of the obligation no longer in any external authority, but precisely in human reason. That being so, the obligation could not involve a ban on opinions. For as soon as other thinkers are persuaded that human reason does not make these particular opinions obligatory, they are bound, *in conformity with Maimonides' own system*, to believe each what he thinks true, and not what Maimonides erroneously thought true. In other words: if we wish to judge Maimonides' system from the point of view of its effects on Judaism, we must look not at the Thirteen Articles which he laid down as obligatory principles in accordance with that system, but at the one principle which underlies all others—that of the supremacy of reason. A philosopher who frees reason from authority in general must at the same time free it from his own authority; he cannot regard any view as obligatory except so long as it is made obligatory by reason. Imagine a man put in prison and given the key: can he be said to have lost his liberty?¹

¹ I may remark in passing that Luzzatto (*ibid.*) accuses Maimonides of yet another disservice to Judaism. By making opinions the essential element of perfection Maimonides, according to him, abolished the difference between the righteous man and the wicked. "The philosopher," he says, "may commit theft, murder, and adultery, and yet attain eternal life: salvation does not depend on merit." This charge was already brought against Maimonides by his medieval opponents, but it is quite mistaken. Maimonides insists, over and over again, that until a man has moral perfection it is impossible for him to reach intellectual perfection to the degree necessary for the attainment of acquired intellect. See, for instance, the passage from the introduction to *Zera'im* quoted above (p. 174).

IV

Here ends what I wished to say about the supremacy of reason in Maimonides' system ; and here I might conclude this Essay. But I should like to add some remarks on another supremacy—on that of the national sentiment. In these days we cannot discuss the thought of one of our great men, even if there are seven hundred years between him and us, without wanting to know whether and to what extent his thought reveals traces of that sentiment which we now regard as the most vital element in the life of Judaism.

But this question really contains two different questions, which have to be answered differently so far as Maimonides is concerned. The first question is : Did Maimonides recognise the supremacy of the national sentiment in the spiritual life of his people, and allow it consciously and of set purpose an important place in the teaching of Judaism ? The second is : Do we find traces of the supremacy of the national sentiment—as an unconscious and spontaneous instinct—in the mentality of Maimonides himself ?¹

The first question cannot be answered in the affirmative : the evidence is rather on the negative side. Had

¹ Though the conception of " nationalism " in its current sense is modern, the national sentiment itself has existed in our people at all times ; and its existence and value have been realised in our literature in every period, from the Bible and the Talmud to the literature of Chassidism, though it used to be called by other names (" the love of Israel," etc.). But the sentiment and its expression do not appear to the same extent or in the same form in all ages and in all individuals, and it is therefore legitimate to ask what was the attitude of any particular age or any particular thinker to the national sentiment. An interesting book might be written on the history of the national sentiment and consciousness in Israel, dealing with their different manifestations in different ages, their growth and decline, and their expression in the life of the nation and the thought of its great men in each period.

Maimonides recognised clearly the strength of the national sentiment as a force in Jewish life, and its importance as a factor in the development of Judaism, he would undoubtedly have used it, as Jehudah Halevi did, to explain the numerous features of Judaism which have their origin in the national sentiment. At any rate, he would not have endeavoured to invest those features with a universalistic character. For instance, in seeking reasons for the commandments he could easily have found that many of them have no purpose but to strengthen the feeling of national unity; and he would not have said of the Festivals that they "promote the good feeling that men should have to each other in their social and political relations."¹ Nor would he have said, in dealing with the future redemption, that "the wise men and the prophets only longed for the days of the Messiah in order that they might be free to study the *Torah* and its wisdom, without any oppression or interference, and so might win eternal life."² No doubt we do sometimes find in his Letters, and especially in those that were written to encourage his people in times of national trouble, feeling references to the fortunes and the mission of the Jewish people.³ But despite these isolated and casual references, only one conclusion can be drawn from the general tenor of Maimonides' teaching: that he did not recognise the value of the national element in Jewish life, and did not allow that element due weight in his exposition of

¹ *Guide*, III., chap. xliii. Similarly in chap. xlvi.

² End of *Mishneh Torah*.

³ See the *Iggereth Teman* and the *Treatise of the Sanctification of the Name*.

Judaism.¹ On the other hand, various indications show that in Maimonides himself the national sentiment was, without his knowledge, a powerful force: so much so, that it sometimes actually drove him from the straight road of logic and reason, and entangled him—of all men—in contradictions which had no ground or justification in his theory. We shall always find in the psychology of even the most logical thinker, despite his efforts to give to reason the undivided empire of his thought, some remote corner to which its sway cannot extend; and we shall always find a rebel band of ideas, which reason cannot control, breaking out from that point of vantage to disturb the order of its realm. Of this truth Maimonides may serve as an example. It is particularly evident in regard to the dogmas of Judaism which he laid down, accompanied by a declaration that “if any man rejects one of these fundamental beliefs, he severs himself from the community and denies a principle of Judaism: he is called a heretic and an unbeliever, and it is right to hate him and to destroy him.”² As we have already seen, it is an inevitable consequence of Maimonides’ teaching that the dogmas of religion must be formulated clearly and made obligatory on the whole people. But in strict accordance with his system Maimonides ought to have included among the dogmas only those “true opinions” without which religion could not have been maintained or have

¹ A German Jewish scholar, Dr. D. Rosin, in his monograph on the ethics of Maimonides (*Die Ethik des Maimonides*, Breslau, 1876), finds under the heading of “Nationalism” (p. 148) only two laws in the whole *Mishneh Torah* which allude to the duties of the Jew to his people. But in fact the two laws which he quotes (*Hilchoth T’shubah*, chap. iii. 11, and *Hilchoth Matnath Aniim*, chap. x. 2) emphasise rather the unity of the members of one faith.

² Introduction to chapter *Chelek*.

fulfilled its function. And in fact all his dogmas are of that character, except only the two last—those which assert the coming of the Messiah and the resurrection. How, then, did he come to include these two?

This question was raised soon after Maimonides' own time (especially in regard to the belief in the Messiah); and his critics rightly pointed out that before laying down dogmas one must define exactly what is meant by a dogma, so that we may know how to distinguish between what may and what may not be properly so called.¹ It is indeed strange that Maimonides forgot so elementary a rule of logic, and still more strange when we remember that elsewhere, in enumerating the six hundred and thirteen commandments of the Law, he was fully alive to the necessity of explaining first of all "the principles which it is proper to take as a criterion," in order to select from the multitude of ordinances in the *Torah* those capital commandments from which the rest are derived. For this reason he fell foul of the earlier enumerations, which he regarded as ignorantly made and full of mistakes; and for his own part he first laid down fourteen "principles," and then proceeded to enumerate the commandments according to those principles.² But if this procedure was necessary in dealing with the practical commandments, surely it was even more necessary in the case of the dogmas of faith. How, then, did it happen that Maimonides embarked on so important a task as the enumeration of dogmas without first laying down some principle by which to guide himself?

It seems to me that we have to do here not with a casual mistake, but with one of those facts which

¹ See Albo, *Ikkarim*, Part I, chap. 1.

² See his Introduction to the *Sepher Hammitzvoth*.

indicate that the national sentiment was strong enough in Maimonides to conquer even logic. If Maimonides had set out to define the term "dogma" in its purely religious sense, he could not have found the slightest justification for regarding the national belief in a future redemption as a dogma. But he felt that a national hope was necessary to the existence of the nation; and without the existence of the nation the continuance of its religion is unthinkable. It was this feeling that made him for once oblivious of logic, and prevented him from clearing up in his own mind the nature of religious dogmas in general, so that he might be able to include among them that national belief on which the nation depends for its existence, although it has no direct relation to the maintenance of religion as such.¹

So also with the belief in resurrection, by which our people has always set great store in its exile. Every individual Jew has suffered the pain of exile not merely in his own person, but as a member of his people; his indignation and grief have been excited not by his private trouble only, but by the national trouble. He could find personal consolation in the hope of eternity in paradise; but this did not blunt the edge of the national trouble, which demanded its consolation in the prospect of a bright future for the nation. In those days the individual Jew was no longer, as in ancient times, keenly conscious that successive generations were made one by the organic life of the nation; and he could not therefore find consolation in the happiness which awaited his people at the end of time, but which he himself would not share. Hence he clung to the belief in

¹ I remarked on this point years ago in "Past and Future." [See *Selected Essays by Ahad Ha'am*, p. 87.]

resurrection, which offered what he required—a reward to himself for his individual share of the national grief. Just as every Jew had participated, during his own lifetime, in the national sorrow, so would every Jew be privileged in the future to see with his own eyes the national consolation and redemption.¹ Thus the belief in resurrection was complementary to the belief in the Messiah. United, they gave the people heart and strength to bear the yoke of exile and to battle successfully against a sea of troubles, confident that sooner or later the haven would be reached. When, therefore, Maimonides found it written in the Mishnah (beginning of chapter *Chelek*) that he who denies resurrection forfeits eternal life, he did not feel any need to explain this statement in a sense opposed to its literal meaning, as he usually did when his system so demanded, but took it just as he found it, and made it a dogma. He satisfied his heart at the expense of his head.

Strangely enough, Maimonides himself was perplexed over the question of resurrection, and could not explain why he clung to a belief which it was not easy to combine with his own theory of the soul and the future life. When he formulates the dogmas in his Commentary on the Mishnah, he passes hurriedly over this one, and dismisses it in a few words, as though he were afraid that if he lingered at this point logic would catch him up and ask awkward questions. In the *Mishneh Torah*, again, he does not explain this dogma at all, either at the beginning of the book, where he deals with the Foundations of the Law, or at the end, where he discusses the Messianic Age. This omission led some of his critics to suspect that he did not really believe in a literal resur-

¹ Cf. *supra*, p. 10.

rection of the body, but explained it in the sense of the rebirth of the soul hereafter (on which he enlarges very often). This suspicion made him very indignant, and he wrote a whole treatise to prove that he had never intended to take resurrection in any but its literal sense. On the contrary, he maintained that the belief must be accepted literally, and that it was in no way inconsistent with what he had written or with his general view.¹ But the arguments in this treatise are all very weak, and the general impression which it leaves is that he did not clearly understand his own mind. He felt instinctively that he could not give up this belief, though it was foreign to his system; but it was only with great difficulty that he could explain why he allowed it such importance. It was, of course, impossible for a man like Maimonides to admit to himself that he was following feeling rather than reason. He tried therefore to justify his standpoint on rational grounds, but without success.²

We find the same struggle between philosophical system and national sentiment in Maimonides' attitude to the Hebrew language. From the point of view of his system he naturally saw no difference between one language and another: what matters is the idea, not its external dress. Hence he lays it down that speech "is

¹ See the *Treatise on Resurrection*.

² Luzzatto (*ubi supra*) seems to suspect that Maimonides' whole treatment of resurrection was insincere, and that he was deliberately throwing dust in the reader's eyes, in order to conceal his heresy. But this suspicion is absurd: Maimonides was a man who was not afraid openly to reject even the immortality of the soul, and to recast all the fundamental beliefs of Judaism. Any unbiassed reader of the treatise must realise that Maimonides defends resurrection with perfect sincerity, but that he is unable to find the real grounds of his own conviction, because he looks for them in his reason and not in his feelings.

not to be forbidden or allowed, loved or despised, according to the language, but according to the subject. That which is lofty may be said in whatever language; that which is mean may not be said in any language."¹ Practising what he preached, he wrote most of his books not in Hebrew, but in Arabic, because he thought that by being written in the ordinary language of his age and his surroundings they would be of greater use from the point of view of their subject-matter. The only book that he wrote in Hebrew was the *Mishneh Torah*; and here also he was guided by practical considerations. He chose the language of the Mishnah because he wanted his people to regard the book with respect as a kind of second Mishnah. The beautiful Mishnaic language would carry off the "true opinions," which needed the help of a sacred language to make them holy and bring them under the ægis of religion. Thus far Maimonides the philosopher. But in his letters we find clear indications that after he had finished his work his national sentiment proved stronger than his philosophy, and he regretted that he had not written his other works in Hebrew as well. Not only that, but he actually thought of translating them into the national language himself, so as "to separate that which is precious from that which is defiled, and to restore stolen goods to their rightful owner." But the decline of his powers in old age did not permit him to carry out this intention, and the Hebrew translation had to wait for other hands. Some of it was done in his lifetime; and his letter to the translator of the *Guide* shows how pleased he was.²

¹ *Commentary on the Mishnah, Aboth*, chap. i. 17.

² See his letters to Joseph ben Gabar, to the community of Lunel, and to R. Samuel Ibn Tibbon (*Collected Responses of Maimonides* (Leipsic), Part II., pp. 16, 27, 44).

But there is really no need to look for the influence of the national sentiment in particular parts of Maimonides' work. His work as a whole cannot be fully understood unless we allow for this sentiment. Of course, as we have seen, Maimonides' efforts to improve religion were the result of his philosophy, which taught him that religion must be made fit to fulfil its function in the spheres of theory and practice; and for his own part he certainly believed that he was actuated solely by this conviction, and was doing, as needs he must, what reason demanded of him. But we, who look at things in the light of modern psychology, which tells us that intellectual conviction is not sufficient to produce sustained effort unless it is accompanied by a strong emotion, whereby the will is roused to conquer all obstacles—we cannot conceive the possibility of arduous work without a compelling emotion. And when we look for the emotion which is most likely to furnish an explanation in this particular case, we shall find none except the national sentiment.

For we know, on the one hand, that religious laws were for Maimonides nothing but an instrument of education—a means of confirming people in true beliefs and good habits of life. Moreover, he regarded many of them (sacrifices and the ceremonial associated with sacrifices) as merely a necessary evil, designed to restrict a bad practice which had taken root in the national life at an early period, and could not be abolished entirely; and even this justification applied only to the laws as a whole, while their details, as we saw above, were in his opinion wholly without meaning or significance. And yet, holding such views, he worked day and night for ten years to collect all these laws and arrange them,

with meticulous exactness, down to their smallest details. Whoever realises the enormous labour that it required to get together the mass of legal prescriptions, scattered over an extensive literature, must admit that no man can be qualified for the work (even if he recognises its usefulness from a certain point of view) unless the work itself has a strong attachment for him. To see the usefulness of the work is not enough; it must be a real labour of love. What then can have kept Maimonides to his task if not the national sentiment, which made him love his people's Law and ancient customs even where his philosophy did not attach to them any particular importance?

And on the other side, Maimonides could not have laboured to turn Judaism into a pure philosophy without the help of the national sentiment. We can understand the religious philosopher who tries to effect a compromise between religion and philosophy. The impelling force is his religious feeling: anxious to save religion from the danger threatened by rationalism, he adopts the familiar expedient of dressing religion in the trappings of philosophy, so as to safeguard its essential meaning. But when a philosopher starts, as Maimonides did, with the conviction that there is no room for compromise, but that religion is compelled, willy-nilly, to teach only what reason approves and when he labours indefatigably to purify religious belief of all super-rational elements, and to turn its essential content into a pure philosophical system, and all this by long and devious methods, which reason cannot always approve: then we are bound to ask what emotion it was that gave him the strength and the will-power required for so difficult a task. Religious emotion certainly gained

nothing from a process by which religion was driven from its own throne and deprived of its letters patent as a guide to eternal happiness along a private road of its own. Philosophical emotion—if the term may be used—might have gained more if Maimonides had accepted and prescribed the method adopted by free-thinkers before and after him—that of leaving faith to the believing masses and being satisfied for his own part with reason alone. But the national sentiment did gain a great deal by the transformation of the Jewish religion—the only national inheritance which had survived to unite our scattered people in exile—into philosophical truth, firmly based on rational and (as Maimonides sincerely believed) irrefragable proofs, and consequently secure for all time against assault.

So we come finally to the conclusion that Maimonides, too, like the other Jewish thinkers, had as the ultimate aim of his great work (though perhaps he did not realise it clearly) the shaping of the content and form of Judaism into a fortress on which the nation could depend for its continuance in exile. There is only this difference: that whereas his predecessors held Judaism secure because it was *above* reason, Maimonides came and said: “No! Judaism is secure because it is reason.”

JUDAISM AND THE GOSPELS

(1910)

English Jewry is at ease. There are no doubt traces here and there of anti-Semitism, nor are there wanting in the inner life of the community indications of what may be called "servitude in freedom." But when all allowances are made, the Jews enjoy a firmer and a more secure position here than in other countries, and anxiety for the future, with all that it involves, plays a smaller part in their mental life. Hence their internal development is more "normal" than elsewhere; it is less at the mercy of external and accidental influences; it is rather determined by the spiritual and cultural resources of the community itself, and corresponds at any given time to the extent of those resources. To this circumstance is due the comparatively late appearance of the Reform movement in Anglo-Jewry. True, in the hey-day of the German Reform movement a few people in England attempted to follow the German example; but their small experiment never grew to considerable dimensions, or showed any capacity for development. The reason is that whereas in Germany there was an external, political impulse towards Reform—the desire to combat anti-Jewish feeling, and thus to facilitate the attainment of civil and political rights—in England this motive was less felt. For though certain political restrictions were still in force, the position of the Jews

was much better, and their relations with non-Jews were much more satisfactory, than in Germany.

But in more recent years education and the circumstances of life have brought about a change in the internal, spiritual condition of the Anglo-Jewish community : a new generation has arisen, which is very far removed from the *spirit* of Judaism. It is this internal change in the Jews which has called into being the Reform movement which we now see developing before our eyes. To the difference in origin corresponds a difference in character. In Germany the Reform movement, practical in its motives, took a practical shape. Geiger and other Reformers endeavoured, on the one side, to alter the religious practices, and to bring them into conformity with what they conceived to be the needs of the time ; but on the other side they laid stress on the grandeur of the religious and moral principles on which Judaism peculiarly was based, and tried to emphasise the *difference* between Judaism and Christianity. But in England the Reform movement springs from a spiritual cause—from a conviction on the part of many Jews that they are spiritually *akin* to their Christian environment. It is not merely the external observances of traditional Judaism that fail any longer to appeal to them ; its innermost spirit, the fundamental ideas by which it is distinguished from Christianity, have lost their hold. Hence the movement here aims right at the heart ; it wants to change the *spirit* of Judaism, and to overthrow its historical foundations, so as to reduce its distinctive features to a small compass, and to bring it as closely as possible into accord with the Christian ideas of the non-Jewish community. Thirteen years ago this movement was begun in England by a body of

young men, who thus straightforwardly and clearly expressed their aim :

“ . . . Our triumphant emancipation is now working out its natural result upon us. Constant intercourse with non-Jews and extensive secular education must materially affect our opinions. We, who are young and earnest lovers of our religion, are struggling with new ideas which we hardly dare to formulate, because they are contrary to all accepted traditions. Such are the notions that our separateness seems now merely external and artificial, our racial distinctiveness often scarcely perceptible, and our religious ideas almost identical with those of Theists and true Unitarians.”¹

But as it was difficult for them, in spite of everything, to abandon Judaism altogether, and to join the “Theists and true Unitarians,” they conceived the idea of attaining their object in the reverse way. They would transform Judaism itself, until it should contain nothing but the fundamental ideas of the “Theists and true Unitarians,” and then—so they fondly imagined—these latter would come and find shelter in Judaism, and so the “external and artificial” distinction would be comfortably and pleasantly removed ! This movement did not take definite shape at the time, and after a while it disappeared and was no longer heard of. But the causes which had given it birth did not cease to work silently beneath the surface ; and quite recently it has come forth again into the light of day, to play its part in the visible life of Anglo-Jewry. This time it appears in a more concrete form and with a clearer consciousness of the goal for which it is making. Its promoters have come to see, after all, that even if their Judaism is

¹ *Jewish Quarterly Review*, January, 1897, p. 187.

to teach the very doctrine of the "liberal" Christian sects, there will still be an "external and artificial" distinction between themselves and the non-Jew, so long as they do not accept the *source* of that doctrine—so long as they do not admit, with the "liberal" Christians, that the New Testament is the last word in religious and moral development, and Jesus the most perfect embodiment of the religious and moral ideal. For in matters of religion men value not alone the abstract beliefs in themselves, but also—and perhaps more highly—the historical and psychological roots from which those beliefs have grown up in their hearts. It was well said many years ago by Steinthal that if ever a new religion, a philosophical religion, suited to modern times, should unite Jews and Christians, they would still be divided on the question whether the Old Testament or the Gospels had contributed in greater measure to the birth of the new religion.

Our English Reformers, therefore, have decided to remove even this stumbling-block from the path which leads to unity, and have decreed that the New Testament (or at least the Gospels) must be considered a part—and the most important part—of Judaism, and that Jesus must be regarded as a prophet—and the greatest of the prophets—in Israel. This pronouncement is certainly a step forward along a certain line of development, of which we are not yet at the end. We need not therefore be surprised if these Reformers do not realise the strangeness of their attitude, with its combination of contradictory and mutually destructive postulates. Whereas revolution overthrows the old at a single stroke, and puts the new in its place, evolution destroys and builds in sections, so that, until its work

is complete, it is full of contradictions and inconsistencies—the old and the new jostling one another in confusion, and creating by their unnatural juxtaposition the impression of a caricature, which is obvious to the onlooker, but not to those who are engaged in the work. So this Reformed Judaism, which wants to be two opposites—Jewish and Evangelist—at once, has its place as a rung in the middle of the ladder, a step on the road of evolution to its final goal. At this stage of the journey our Reformers still think that it is possible to put the Gospels *beside* the Old Testament and the Talmud. But when they reach the next stage they will recognise that the two cannot exist side by side, but only one above the other, and that when one stands the other falls. The early Christians went through the same process : they regarded their “ message ” at first simply as a part of Judaism ; but when they had travelled the full length of their development, they saw that the Gospels meant the overthrow of the very foundations of Judaism, and then they left it altogether.

If anybody is doubtful about the true character and tendency of this movement, let him read the commentary on the Synoptic Gospels recently published by the leader of the movement, Mr. C. G. Montefiore. The author makes no secret of the fact that the book has been written for Jewish readers, with the object of convincing them that the New Testament ought to occupy an important position in Judaism at the present time, albeit from a Jewish point of view. The claims of the “ Jewish point of view ” he thinks to satisfy by his frequent efforts to show that the Law of the Rabbis was not so bad as it is painted by the authors of the New Testament and its commentators, and that in many

respects the old Judaism rose to the level of the Gospels, nay, had in certain details actually more of truth.¹ But the general atmosphere of the book is so utterly alien from the essential character of Judaism as to make one fact clear beyond a shadow of doubt to any Jew in whom Judaism is still alive—that the Gospels can be received only into a Judaism which has lost its own true spirit, and remains a mere corpse.

The author is doubtless correct in saying that a Jewish commentary on the New Testament is needed at the present time.² Living in a Christian environment, we imbibe a culture in which many Christian ideas and sentiments are inwoven, and it is therefore necessary for us to know their source, so as to be able to distinguish between them and the universal elements of culture. But this Jewish commentary must be far removed from any polemical propagandist intention on one side or the other. Its sole object must be to *understand* thoroughly the teaching of the Gospels, to define with *scientific* accuracy its character, the foundations on which it rests, and the differences which distinguish it from Judaism. What is needed is not the “scientific accuracy” of the Christian commentators (that spring from which Mr. Montefiore drinks with such avidity), who set out with the preconceived idea that the teaching of the Gospels is superior to that of Judaism, and use their “science” merely to find details in support of this general belief. When a writer claims to be “scientific,” he must recog-

¹ Notes of this kind are found right through the book (see e.g. pp. 498—503, 691—3, and many other places); and it is unfair of some Jewish critics to have passed over this fact in silence, and to have described the book as though it were throughout simply an attack on Judaism.

² Introduction, pp. xvii. xviii. ci.

nise above all that in the field of religion and morality it is impossible to set up a universal scientific criterion, by which to measure the different teachings, and to pronounce one superior to another. In this sphere everything is relative, and the judge brings to his task a subjective standard of his own, determined by his temperament, his education and his environment. We Jews, being everywhere a minority, are always subject to various influences, which counteract and weaken each other; and we, therefore, are possibly better able than others to understand objectively ideas which are not our own. Hence it was indeed right that there should be a Jewish commentary (not a Jewish panegyric) on the New Testament. Such a commentary might perhaps have enabled Jews of our author's stamp to recognise that it is possible to treat with seriousness and justice a religion which is strange to us, without shutting our eyes to the gulf which separates it from ourselves.

I should like to dwell for a brief space on the nature of this "gulf." So large a subject needs a whole book for its full treatment; but something, it seems to me, ought to be said just at this moment—and perhaps the need is not confined to England.

If the heathen of the old story, who wished to learn the whole *Torah* standing on one leg,¹ had come to me, I should have told him: "'Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image or any likeness'—that is the whole *Torah*, and the rest is commentary." The essential characteristic of Judaism, which distinguishes it from other religions, is its absolute determination to

¹ [The story is that a heathen made this demand of Hillel, whose reply was: "What is hateful to thyself do not unto thy neighbour—that is the whole *Torah*, and the rest is commentary: go thou and fulfil it."]

make the religious and moral consciousness independent of any definite human form, and to attach it *immediately* to an *abstract* ideal which has "no likeness." We cannot conceive Christianity without Jesus, or even Islam without Mohammed. Christianity made a god of Jesus, but that is not the important fact. Even if Jesus had remained the "son of man," had been only a prophet, as Mohammed is to the Mussulmans, that would not have affected the thing that really matters—the attachment of the religious and moral consciousness to the figure of a particular man, who is regarded as the ideal of absolute perfection, and the goal of men's vision; to believe in whom is an essential part of a religion inconceivable without him. Judaism, and Judaism alone, depends on no such human "likeness." God is the only idea of absolute perfection, and He only must be kept always before the eye of man's inner consciousness, in order that many may "cleave to his attributes." The best of men is not free from shortcomings and sins, and cannot serve as an ideal for the religious sentiment, which strives after union with the source of perfection. Moses died in his sin, like any other man. He was simply God's messenger, charged with the giving of His Law; his image was not worked into the very fabric of the religion, as an essential part of it. Thus the Jewish teachers of a later period found nothing to shock them in the words of one who said in all simplicity: "Ezra was worthy to be the bearer of the Law to Israel, had not Moses come before him" (*Sanhedrin*, 21a). Could it enter a Christian mind, let us say, to conceive the idea that Paul was worthy to be the bearer of the "message," had not Jesus come before him? And it need scarcely be said that the individual figures

of the other Prophets are not an essential part of the fabric of Judaism. Of the greatest of them—Hosea, Amos, Isaiah, and others—we do not even know who or what they were ; their personalities have vanished like a shadow, and only their words have been preserved and handed down from generation to generation, because they were not *their* words, but “ the word of the Lord that came unto them.”

This applies equally to the Messiah, who is awaited in the future. His importance lies not in himself, but in his being *the messenger of God* for the bringing of redemption to Israel and the world. Jewish teachers pay much more attention to “ the days of the Messiah ” than to the Messiah himself. One of them even disbelieved altogether in a personal Messiah, and looked forward to a redemption effected by God Himself without an intermediary ; and he was not therefore regarded as a heretic.

This characteristic of Judaism was perhaps the principal obstacle to its wider acceptance. It is difficult for men in general to find satisfaction in an abstract ideal which offers no hold to the senses ; a human figure much more readily inspires enthusiasm. Before the triumph of Christianity the Greeks and the Romans used to accuse the Jews of having no God, because a divinity without “ any likeness ” had for them no meaning ; and when the time came for the God of Israel to become also the God of the nations, they still could not accept His sway without associating with Him a divine ideal in human form, so as to satisfy their need for a more concrete and nearer ideal.

This is not the place to discuss the origin of this distinctive preference on the part of Israel for an *abstract*

religious and moral ideal. Be the reason what it may, the fact remains true, and has been true these thousands of years ; and so long as Israel undergoes no fundamental change, and does not become something different, it cannot be influenced on the religious side by a book like the Gospels, which finds the object of religious devotion and moral emulation not in the abstract Godhead alone, but first and foremost in a man born of woman. It matters not whether he be called " Son of God," " Messiah," or " Prophet " : Israel cannot accept with religious enthusiasm, as the word of God, the utterances of a man who speaks in his own name—not " thus saith the Lord," but " *I say unto you.*" This " I " is in itself sufficient to drive Judaism away from the Gospels for ever. And when our author speaks in glowing terms of the religious and moral exaltation which spring from attachment to Jesus as the ideal of holiness and perfection, meaning, as is evident from his tone, to introduce this attachment into Judaism (pp. cvii, 210, 527), he is simply proving that he and those who think with him are already estranged from the essential nature of Judaism, which does not recognise ideal holiness and perfection in man. " Ye shall be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy "—that is Judaism. " Ye shall be holy, because the Messiah (or the Prophet) is holy "—that is an ideal better calculated, no doubt, to inspire enthusiasm and exaltation among the peoples ; but it will never kindle the religious fire in Israel unless the very last drop of true Judaism be dried up. It was not for nothing that our ancient teachers called God "*the holy one*, blessed be He " : for Judaism absolute holiness exists only in the one God. We have had no doubt, at various periods, our mystic sects, which, influenced con-

sciously or unconsciously by foreign ideas, have here turned aside more or less from the Jewish road. But the sect is only a temporary and partial phenomenon, pointing to some internal disease which affects the national life in a given period. Our history shows that the end of these sects is to die out, or to leave Judaism. Sects come and sects go, but Judaism remains for ever.

This fundamental tendency of Israel to rise clear of "any likeness" in its religious and moral life is evident not only in relation to the religious and moral *ideal*, but also in relation to the religious and moral *goal*. There is no need to dilate on the well-worn truth that the Law of Judaism sees its goal not in the "salvation" of the individual man, but in the prosperity and perfection of the general body; that is to say, of the nation, and, in "the latter end of days," of the whole human race—a collective idea which has no defined concrete form. In the most fruitful period of Judaism, the period of the Prophets and "the giving of the Law," it had no clear idea on the subject of the survival of the soul and reward and punishment after death. All the enthusiasm of the Prophets and their disciples was derived not from this source, but from the conviction of their being children of "the chosen people," which was entrusted by God (as they believed) with the mission of embodying religion and morality, in their highest form, in its national life. Even in later times, when the Babylonian exile had destroyed the nation's freedom, and the desire for individual salvation had consequently come to play a part in the religious consciousness, the *highest* good of Judaism still remained collective. Scholars will need no proof of this fact. For those who are not scholars it will be sufficient to examine the daily and festival

prayer-books, in order to realise that only a small part of the prayers turns on the particular needs of the individual, while most deal with the concerns of the *nation* and the human race in general.

Which of these two goals is "superior"? This question has already been endlessly debated; and the truth is that we cannot here establish a scale of values. A man may attain to the highest eminence in his religious and moral life, whether he pursues this goal or that. But individual salvation is certainly nearer to the hearts of most men, and is better suited to kindle their imagination and to inspire them with the desire for moral and religious perfection. If Judaism, as distinguished from other religions, prefers the collective goal, this only means that here also there makes itself felt that tendency to abstraction and to the repudiation of the human image which is peculiar to Israel. So long as this tendency remains—so long, that is, as our people does not lose its essential character—no true Jew will be able to feel any great fondness for the doctrine of the Gospels—a doctrine which rests (despite our author's endeavours to present the matter in a more favourable light, cf. pp. 211, 918) wholly and solely on the pursuit of individual salvation.

The tendency of Judaism which I have mentioned shows itself in yet one other matter, and this perhaps the most important—in the basis of morality. It is an oft-repeated formula that Jewish morality is based on *justice*, and the morality of the Gospels on *love*. But it seems to me that not all those who draw this distinction fully appreciate its meaning. It is usual to regard the difference only as one of degree, the moral scale and its basis being the same in either case. Both doctrines,

it is supposed, are directed against egoism ; but the Christians hold that their religion has reached a higher stage, while the Jews refuse to admit their claim. Thus the Christian commentators point proudly to the *positive* principle of the Gospels : “ Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so unto them ” (Matt. vii. 12 ; Luke vi. 31), and thereby disparage Judaism, which has only the *negative* principle of Hillel : “ What is hateful to thyself do not unto thy neighbour.” Mr. Montefiore debates the matter, and cannot make up his mind whether the positive principle really embraces *more* in its intention than the negative, or whether Hillel and Jesus meant the same thing. But of this at least he is certain, that if Hillel’s saying were suddenly discovered somewhere in a positive form, the Jews would be “ rather pleased,” and the Christians would be “ rather sorry ” (p. 550).

But if we look deeper, we shall find that the difference between the two doctrines on this point is not one of less or more, but that there is a fundamental difference between their views as to the basis of morality. It was not by accident that Hillel put his principle in negative form ; the truth is that the moral basis of Judaism will not bear the positive principle. If the positive saying were to be found somewhere attributed to Hillel, we should not be able to rejoice ; we should have to impugn the genuineness of a “ discovery ” which put into Hillel’s mouth a saying opposed to the spirit of Judaism.

The root of the distinction lies here also, as I have said, in the love of Judaism for *abstract* principles. The moral law of the Gospels beholds man in his individual shape, with his natural attitude towards himself and

others, and asks him to reverse this attitude, to substitute the "other" for the "self" in his individual life, to abandon plain egoism for inverted egoism. For in truth the altruism of the Gospels is neither more nor less than inverted egoism. Altruism and egoism alike deny the individual *as such* all *objective* moral value, and make him merely a *means* to a subjective end; but egoism makes the "other" a means to the advantage of the "self," while altruism does just the reverse. Now Judaism removed this subjective attitude from the moral law, and based it on an abstract, objective foundation, on *absolute justice*, which regards the individual as such as having a moral value, and makes no distinction between the "self" and the "other." According to this view, it is the sense of justice in the human heart that is the supreme judge of a man's own actions and of those of other men. This sense must be made independent of individual relations, as though it were some separate abstract being; and before it all men, *including the self*, must be equal. All men, including the self, must develop their lives and their faculties to the utmost possible extent, and at the same time each must help his neighbour to attain that goal, so far as he is able. Just as I have no right to ruin another man's life for the sake of my own, so I have no right to ruin my own life for the sake of another's. Both of us are men, and both our lives have the same value before the throne of justice.

I know no better illustration of this point of view than the following well-known *B'raitha*: "Imagine two men journeying through the desert, only one of whom has a bottle of water. If both of them drink, they must both die; if one of them only drinks, he will reach safety.

Ben P'tura held that it was better that both should drink and die, than that one should witness the death of his comrade. But Akiba refuted this view by citing the scriptural verse, 'and thy brother shall live with thee.' *With thee*—that is to say, thine own life comes before thy neighbour's'' (*Baba M'zia*, 62a).

We do not know who Ben P'tura was, but we do know R. Akiba, and we may be sure that through him the spirit of Judaism speaks. Ben P'tura, the altruist, does not value human life for its own sake; for him it is better that two lives should perish, where death demands but one as his toll, so long as the altruistic sentiment prevails. But Jewish morality regards the question from an objective standpoint. Every action that leads to loss of life is evil, even though it springs from the purest feelings of love and mercy, and even if the sufferer is himself the agent. In the case before us, where it is possible to save one of the two souls, it is a moral duty to overcome the feeling of mercy, and to save. But to save whom? Justice answers—let him who can save himself. Every man's life is entrusted to his keeping, and to preserve your own charge is a nearer duty than to preserve your neighbour's.

But when one came to Raba, and asked him what he should do when one in authority threatened to kill him unless he would kill another man, Raba answered him: "Be killed, and kill not. Who hath told thee that thy blood is redder than his? Perhaps his blood is redder" (*P'sachim*, 25b). And Rashi, whose "sense of Judaism" generally reveals to him the hidden depths of meaning, correctly understands the meaning here also, and explains thus: "The question only arises because thou knowest that *no religious law is binding in the face of danger to*

life, and thinkest that in this case also the prohibition of murder ceases to be binding *because thine own life is in danger*. But this transgression is unlike others. *For do what thou wilt, there must here be a life lost. . . .* Who can tell thee that thy life is more precious in the sight of God than his? Perhaps his is more precious."

If a man brought a question like this to a Christian priest, the priest would certainly begin to expatiate in glowing terms on the duty of a man to sacrifice his life for another, to "bear his cross" in the footsteps of his "Messiah," so that he might win the kingdom of heaven—and so forth. But the Jewish teacher weighs the question in the scales of objective justice: "Seeing that in either case a life must be lost, and there is none to say which of the two lives is more precious in God's sight, therefore your own danger does not entitle you to break the sixth commandment. Be killed; kill you must not!" But suppose the case reversed; suppose the question to be "Another is going to be killed, and I can save him by giving my life instead of his, what shall I do?" Then Raba would have replied: "Let such a one be killed, and do not destroy thyself. For do what thou wilt there must here be a life lost; and who hath told thee that his blood is redder than thine? Perhaps thine own is redder." From the standpoint of Judaism every man's blood is as red as any other's, every soul is "precious in the sight of God," be it mine or another's, therefore no man is at liberty to treat his life as his own property; no man has a right to say: "I am endangering myself; what right have others to complain of that?" (Maimonides' Code, *Laws of Murder*, XI. 5). The history of Judaism can tell, indeed, of many acts of self-sacrifice, the memory of which will

remain precious and holy for all time. But these are not cases of one life given for the preservation of another similar life, they are sacrifices of human life for "the sanctification of the Name" (the religious ideal) or for "the good of the community" (the religious goal).

And justice demands that we rise above sentiment not only in deciding as between the self and another, but also in deciding as between two other persons. Forty years ago Abraham Geiger—the man in whom our latter-day "Reformers" see their spiritual father—pointed out that the Jewish commandment "Neither shalt thou countenance a poor man in his cause" reveals a morality of unparalleled loftiness.¹ All other moral codes warn us only against favouring the persons of the rich and the powerful; and the Gospels, as is well known, favour the persons of the poor, and have much to say of their merits and their future greatness. All this is very well from the point of view of the heart; but a morality based on justice rises above sentiment, and teaches that it is our duty to help the poor man if we are able, but that mercy must not induce us so far to sin against justice as to favour the poor man in his suit.

Herbert Spencer anticipates, as the highest possible development of morality, the transformation of the altruistic sentiment into a natural instinct, so that at last men will be able to find no greater pleasure than in working for the good of others. Similarly Judaism, in conformity with its own way of thought, anticipates the development of morality to a point at which *justice* will become an instinct with good men, so that they will not need long reflection to enable them to decide between different courses of action according to the standard of

¹ *Das Judentum und seine Geschichte* (2nd edition), p. 26.

absolute justice, but will *feel* as in a flash, and with the certainty of instinct, even the slightest deviation from the straight line. Human relations and social grades will not affect them in the least, because the "true judge" within them will pronounce justly on each deed, swayed by no human relation to the doer or the sufferer, considering not whether this one or that is the self or another, is rich or poor. And since Judaism associated its moral aspirations with the "coming of the Messiah," it attributed to the Messiah this perfection of morality, and said that "he will smell and judge" (*Sanhedrin*, 93*b*), on the basis of the scriptural verse: "And shall make him of quick understanding [Heb. "smell"] in the fear of the Lord; and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes." "Because the smell is a very delicate sense, he gives the name of *smell* to the most delicate feeling . . . that is to say, the Messiah *with little attention will feel which men are good, and which evil*" (Isa. xi. 3, with Kimchi's commentary).

But this development lies far ahead in the hidden future. At present the human race still lacks the instinctive "sense of justice," and even the best men are apt to be blinded by self-love or prejudice, so as to be unable to distinguish between good and evil. At present, therefore, we all need some touchstone, some fundamental principle, to help each of us to avoid weighting the scales of justice to suit his own ends or satisfy his personal inclinations. Such a principle Hillel gave us: "What is hateful to thyself do not unto thy neighbour." Altruism teaches: "What thou desirest that others should do unto thee, that do thou unto them." In other words: take the circle of egoism, and put in its *centre*, instead of the "self," the

“other” ; then you will know your whole duty. But Judaism cannot find satisfaction in this substitution, because it demands that *justice* shall be placed at the centre of the circle—justice, which makes no distinction between “self” and “other.” Now in the circle of egoism there is no place for justice except in a negative form. What egoism does *not* wish for itself—that, certainly it will be just *not* to do to another. But what egoism *does* wish for itself is something which has no limits ; and if you oblige a man to *do* this to others, you are inclining the scales of justice to the side of the “other” as against the “self.”

Even that “great principle in the Law” (as R. Akiba called it), “thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself,” though in form it appears to be positive, is in reality, if rightly understood, negative. If the Torah had meant that a man must love his neighbour to the extent of sacrificing his life for him, it would have said : “Thou shalt love thy neighbour *more than* thyself.” But when you love your neighbour *as* yourself, neither more nor less, then your feelings are in a state of perfect equilibrium, with no leaning either to your side or to your neighbour’s. And this is, in fact, the true meaning of the verse. “Self-love must not be allowed to incline the scale on the side of your own advantage ; love your neighbour as yourself, and then inevitably *justice* will be the deciding factor, and you will do nothing to your neighbour that you would consider a wrong if it were done to yourself.” For proof that this is the real meaning we have only to look further in the same passage of Leviticus, where we find : “And if a stranger sojourn with thee in your land, ye shall not vex him. But the stranger that dwelleth with you shall be unto you as one

born among you, and thou shalt love him as thyself" (Lev. xix. 33, 34). Here it is evident that to love the stranger "as thyself" means to carry out the negative precept "ye shall not vex him"; and if the stranger is expressly placed on the same footing as the native, this shows that in relation to the native also the intention is only that self-love must not prove a stronger motive than justice.

But in the Gospels the commandment "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" receives an altruistic sense: it means that your own life is less important than your neighbour's. Hence it is possible to find some small justification for the habit which Christians have of attributing this verse to the Gospels, as though it appeared there, and not in the Mosaic Law, for the first time. It is true that *the meaning which they put on the verse* belongs not to our Law, but to the Gospels.¹

But it must be remembered that in addition to the relation of individual to individual, there is another and more important moral relation—that of nation to nation. Here also some "great principle" is needed to keep within bounds that *national* egoism which is fraught, perhaps, with even greater danger to the collective progress of humanity than individual egoism. If we look at the difference between Judaism and Christianity, in regard to the basis of morality, from this point of view,

¹ John Stuart Mill writes: "In justice to the great Hebrew law-giver, it should always be remembered that the precept to love thy neighbour as thyself already existed in the Pentateuch; and very surprising it is to find it there" (*Three Essays on Religion*, 2nd edition, p. 98). Had Mill understood the precept in its original sense, he would certainly not have been surprised to find it in the Mosaic Law. But even so logical a thinker could not free himself from the influences of his education and his environment, and he did not see that a meaning had been read into this verse which was opposed to its literal sense.

we shall see at once that the altruism of the Gospels is in no way suited to serve as a basis for international relations. A nation can never believe that its moral duty lies in self-abasement, and in the renunciation of its rights for the benefit of other nations. On the contrary, every nation feels and knows that its moral duty is to keep its position and use its powers as a means of creating for itself satisfactory conditions of life, in which it can develop its potentialities to the utmost. Since, then, Christian nations could not base their relations one with another on the moral basis of their religion, national egoism inevitably remained the sole determining force in international politics, and "patriotism," in the Bismarckian sense, attained the dignity of the ultimate moral basis.

But the Jewish law of justice is not confined within the narrow sphere of individual relations. In its Jewish sense the precept, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself," can be carried out by a whole nation in its dealings with other nations. For this precept does not oblige a nation to sacrifice, for the benefit of other nations, its life or its position. It is, on the contrary, the duty of every nation, as of the individual human being, to live and to develop to the utmost extent of its powers; but at the same time it must recognise the right of other nations to fulfil the like duty without let or hindrance, and "patriotism"—that is, national egoism—must not induce it to disregard justice, and to fulfil itself through the destruction of other nations.¹ Hence

¹ The Russian philosopher Vladimir Solovioff was the first, if I am not mistaken, to attempt to find a moral basis for international relations in the precept "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself," taken in the sense mentioned above. This philosopher was an untiring student of Judaism, for which he had an appreciation unusual among Christians—a fact not without its significance.

Judaism was able thousands of years ago to rise to the lofty ideal expressed in the words, "Nation shall not lift up sword against nation." This ideal is, in fact, only an inevitable logical consequence of the idea of absolute justice, which lies at the foundation of Judaism.

Many pages might be filled with the further development of these general ideas; and as many more might without difficulty be given to an exposition of the differences between the two doctrines in points of detail, in such a way as to show that the detailed differences are but the outcome of the broad and fundamental difference between Judaism and Christianity, and that all the compromises and concessions whereby Mr. Montefiore tries to make peace between the two creeds have no real value, either theoretical or practical. But it is not my purpose here to write a book, and I will content myself, so far as general principles are concerned, with the brief hints above set forth. As for details, I will touch here on only one point, to which our author himself attaches more than ordinary importance, and will leave the reader to draw his own conclusions as to the rest.

The Gospels, unlike Judaism, forbid divorce, either absolutely, as in the version of Mark (x. 2-12), or with an exception in the case of unfaithfulness, as in the version of Matthew (xix. 3-12). At the present time, when all Christian nations are struggling with the prohibition of divorce, which came to them from the Gospels, and are trying to annul it or restrict its operation within narrow limits, it may be taken as fairly evident that the recognition of divorce, even on other grounds than unfaithfulness, is demanded by the conscience of society. Nor is it surprising that Judaism, with its essentially social aim, has been true to its

general spirit in its attitude on this question, and has decided, with the school of Hillel, that divorce is permissible not alone on the ground of unfaithfulness, but also when there is from other causes a rupture of the bond of sympathy between man and wife. The important thing here is not the cause, but the effect—the rupture within the home, which must lower the moral tone of the life of the family, and interfere with the proper upbringing of the children. Long experience has taught Judaism that there is no reason to go back on this decision. Even the enemies of Israel cannot deny that Jewish family life has reached a high level of morality; and a result like this does not come about by a miracle, in the teeth of the national code of law, least of all in the case of the Jews, whose life has always been so profoundly influenced by the prescriptions of the *Torah*.¹ It must indeed be admitted that at first only the husband had the right of divorce, and no wife could divorce her husband. In conformity with the primitive view (a view still widely accepted all over the world) that man alone is important, and woman is but “an help meet for him,” it was demanded above all things of the husband that his position in the home should correspond to his moral obligations as the father of the family, and that he should not be compelled by law to live with a woman who was distasteful to him, and to become the father of “children of a hated wife.” But when once it came

¹ Mr. Montefiore, indeed, does not admit this. In his opinion the morality of Jewish family life is a fact not because of the laws, but in spite of them. If you ask how such a thing is possible, he replies somewhat as follows: It has already been remarked that Judaism does not obey the laws of cause and effect, and we sometimes see a certain tendency in Jewish life which ought logically to have certain effects, but has in practice just the opposite results (p. 335). Truly an easy and comfortable “philosophy of history”!

to be recognised that married life cannot tolerate constraint, this recognition, limited at first to the side of the husband, was bound to be gradually extended to the wife. Hence arose the provisions under which a man may be compelled to divorce his wife (*K'thuboth*, ch. vii). These provisions enabled the wife to obtain a divorce against the husband's will, by decree of the courts, on many and various grounds. Thus it is impossible to assert that Judaism does not allow a woman to divorce her husband. In the cases just mentioned it is, in fact, the wife who divorces, though the bill of divorcement is technically given by the husband. What matters is not who performs the legal action, but whose wish it is that brings about the divorce. This tendency to emancipate the wife reached its highest development in the dictum of Maimonides, that if a woman says "My husband is distasteful to me, and I cannot live with him," although she gives no specific reason for her dislike, the husband is yet compelled to divorce her, "because she is not like a captive woman, that she should consort with a man whom she hates" (*Laws of Marriage*, xiv. 8). Here we see the Jewish attitude to marriage in its full development. Marriage is a social and moral cord, the two ends of which are in the hearts of husband and wife; and if the cord is broken at either end—whether in the husband's heart or in the wife's—the marriage has lost its value, and it is best that it should be annulled. It is true that the jurists who came after Maimonides could not rise to the conception of so perfect an equality of the sexes, and did not wholly accept his dictum. But the mere fact that the greatest authority deduced this decision *from the Talmud* (and the Talmud, in fact, affords ground for his view—see

Maggid Mishnah ad loc.) is proof conclusive as to the real tendency of the Jewish law of divorce, and shows whither it leads in the straight line of development.

But the New Testament view of marriage and divorce reveals a very different tendency (Matthew and Mark, *loc. cit.*; Paul, First Epistle to the Corinthians, vii.). As in all the teaching of the Gospels, so here the important thing is *individual* salvation. For the sake of his individual salvation it is better that a man should not marry at all, but should "suffer," and be "a eunuch for the kingdom of heaven's sake." But he who has not strength to suffer may enter into the covenant of marriage with a woman; only this covenant, too, is an *individual* matter, based on *religious mysteries*, not a social and moral act, and therefore it can never be annulled, even if it results in injury to the life of society. "He which made them at the beginning made them male and female and said . . . they twain shall be one flesh. Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. *What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.*" From this standpoint it is immaterial whether there is love or hatred between the couple, whether their union is or is not a good thing for the life of the family and of society. All this does not affect the real point: God has united them, and how shall man dare to separate them?¹

The Catholic Church, correctly understanding the Gospel teaching, has built countless houses of refuge

¹ Even Matthew, who permits divorce on the ground of unfaithfulness, makes this exception (as some Christian commentators have pointed out) only because the sanctity of the marriage is profaned by the sin, and the divine union is annulled *of itself*. The point of view is essentially the same in both versions.

for celibates of both sexes, and has forbidden divorce absolutely, without regard to all the evil results of this prohibition in the embitterment of the life of families and the moral corruption of thousands of men and women. Other Christian Churches have stopped short of this extreme, but have still been unable to free themselves from the Gospel standpoint, so that until recently they have tried to restrict and render ineffective the recognition of divorce. But now at last all Christian nations are beginning to see that this standpoint is not productive of good to the world, and are approaching nearer to the Jewish view.¹

But Christian theologians, in commenting on the Gospels, cannot give up that great principle of theirs, that the Gospel teaching is always based on a higher morality than that of Judaism. And in this case, too, they have found a way—rather far-fetched, it is true—of establishing the truth of their principle. In forbidding divorce, they say, Jesus only meant to protest against the injustice of Judaism to the wife, who could be divorced but could not divorce. He therefore took the right of divorce away from the husband, so that he should have no advantage over the wife. Here, then, is moral “progress,” a battle on woman’s behalf against the oriental barbarism of the Jews, and so forth. We might perhaps point out that there was a more sensible way of bestowing equality on the wife, if that was Jesus’ object—to wit, by giving the wife also the right of divorce. And we might ask, further, how it is

¹ In England the question has become so acute that the Government has appointed a Commission to find means of making divorce easier. Men of knowledge and experience, in evidence before the Commission, have expressed the opinion that the restriction of the possibility of divorce has very evil results.

that Matthew, who allows the husband to divorce his wife for *her* unfaithfulness, never hints at any right on the part of the wife to demand a divorce from the husband on the ground of *his* unfaithfulness.¹ Where, in fact, is the vaunted assertion of the wife's rights? The commentators vouchsafe no answer to these plain and simple questions. But, indeed, there is no need of much questioning. It must be perfectly clear to all who read these passages in the Gospels without preconceived ideas that Jesus, in prohibiting divorce, had not the remotest notion of fighting the wife's battle. The plea is from beginning to end a theological invention, designed to bolster up the theory.

Let us now see what our *Jewish* commentator has to say on this subject (pp. 235-42, 508-10, 688-92). Whoever has not the leisure or the inclination to read the whole eleven hundred pages of Mr. Montefiore's book will find it sufficient to read the pages given to this question, in order to obtain an adequate idea of the real spirit which prevails among our author's following. As he repeatedly pours out the vials of his wrath in harsh and crude denunciations of the Jewish law of divorce, his tone is that of a monk just emerging, Gospel in hand, from his retreat, who has no desire to know anything whatever as to the views which prevail at the present day in the world around him. It is "to his eternal dishonour" that Hillel allowed divorce on other grounds than that of unchastity; it is "most unfortunate" for the Rabbinic law that it endorsed his decision. But "the unerring ethical instinct of Jesus led him to put

¹ In England the law to-day is still in the spirit of Matthew; the wife's unfaithfulness is sufficient ground of divorce for the husband, but the reverse does not hold good.

his finger upon the weak spots and sore places of the established religion," and "of all such weak spots and sore places this was the weakest and the sorest." Hence "in no other point was the opposition of Jesus to the Rabbinic law of profounder significance" (p. 235). In this strain our author continues, with a varied selection of choice phrases. Nor does he forget to adopt from the Christian commentators the theory that the Gospels were fighting the wife's battle; he repeats it several times, here also in a tone of harsh condemnation of Judaism and grateful praise of Jesus (p. 240 and elsewhere). It does not occur to him that the Christian commentators were driven to invent this theory because they saw that from the standpoint of our own age the prohibition of divorce is not in itself a sign of moral progress. But if the recognition of divorce on other grounds than that of unfaithfulness is "an eternal dishonour," then of course there is no need to invent this plea of a battle for the wife's rights, the mere prohibition being sufficient proof of "progress." Nay, there seems to be more lost than gained by this "battle," for if that was really the intention of the prohibition of divorce, then the prohibition must of necessity be absolute (to the exclusion even of the ground of unfaithfulness), since otherwise we are at a loss to understand why the wife, too, was not permitted to obtain a divorce on that ground. But our author himself admits that the prohibition of divorce in case of unfaithfulness had very evil results (p. 242). Where, then, is the "unerring ethical instinct"? There are other similar difficulties, and even plain inconsistencies, to be found in our author's treatment of this subject. But we have already dwelt on it at sufficient length.

Whoever reads all the related passages in the book will be satisfied that there is here neither logic nor "science," nor true, unbiassed judgment, but such partiality to Jesus and the Gospels as the most pious Christian might envy.

It may be worth while, by way of completing the picture, to add just one further point. When our author reaches the end of the passage in Matthew, where the "eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake" are extolled, he finds himself in some perplexity (pp. 690, 691). Clearly, his moral sense is revolted. But how gentle is his language! You will find nothing here about "eternal dishonour" or the like. He lowers his voice in submissive reverence, and tries to find excuses for the Gospel, so that you cannot recognise in him that "higher tribunal" which condemned without mercy what he thought the "weak spot" in *the law of his ancestors*. True, this fact demands no comment; but I am reminded of the author's anticipation (Introduction, p. xix) that Christian critics would find him too Jewish, and Jewish critics too Christian, and I merely wish to remark that this difference of attitude will stamp him, even in the eyes of Jewish critics, as, in one respect at least, *too much of a Jew*.

After what has been said above, it may perhaps appear to many that it was not worth while to give so much attention to such a book, and possibly from the point of view of scholarship and literature they are right. But, as I have already hinted, the book deserves special attention as a revelation of the psychology of a certain section of Jews. It shows us a new kind of Jew, hitherto unknown to history, who has lost every trace of the mighty sorrow which his ancestors felt for the exile of

the nation and the exile of the *Shechinah*,¹ and who yet has a sorrow of his own—the sorrow of a meaningless isolation. He sees that the world has gone its own way, leaving the Jews alone with their *Torah*. This isolation is not unbearable so long as the Jew understands or feels that it is necessary to the preservation of his sacred ideals ; but the real need for it can certainly not be felt by those Jews who think that the difference between themselves and their neighbours is “ external and artificial,” and for whom Judaism is nothing but a dear inheritance, which must be preserved out of respect for their fathers. Hence they seek in various ways to escape from their isolation. Thirteen years ago they believed that they could attain their object by basing Judaism on certain universal beliefs of the Theists. Now they recognise that this is not enough ; they go a step further, and tack on Jesus and the Gospels. This development appears clearly from many passages in the book under notice, of which I will quote here one of the most explicit :

“ Dogmatic Christianity in the course of centuries may disappear ; Trinitarianism may be succeeded by Unitarianism ; but the words of Jesus will still continue to move and cheer the heart of man. If Judaism does not, as it were, come to terms with the Gospels, it must always be, I am inclined to think, a creed in a corner, of little influence and with no expansive power. Orthodox Jews would, I suppose, say that they want no more. Liberal Jews should be less easily satisfied ” (p. 906).

We can certainly understand the state of mind of these Jews ; but they themselves ought also to understand it aright. They would then see that their state

¹ [Divine Presence. See p. 97.]

of mind has no relation to the question of "orthodox" and "liberal" Judaism in the usual sense of the words. A Jew may be a liberal of liberals, without forgetting that Judaism was born "in a corner" and has always lived "in a corner," apart from the great world, which has never understood it, and therefore hates it. Such was the lot of Judaism before the rise of Christianity, and such it has remained since. History has not yet satisfactorily explained how it came about that a tiny nation in a corner of Asia produced a unique religious and moral point of view, which has had so profound an influence on the rest of the world, and has yet remained so foreign to the rest of the world, unable to this day either to conquer it or to surrender to it. This is a historical phenomenon to which, despite a multitude of attempted answers, we must still attach a note of interrogation. But every true Jew, be he "orthodox" or "liberal," feels deep down in his being that there is something in the spirit of our people—though we know not what it is—that kept it from the high-road taken by other nations, and impelled it to build up Judaism on those foundations for the sake of which the people remains to this day confined "in a corner" with its religion, being incapable of renouncing them. Let them who still have this feeling remain within the fold; let them who have lost it go elsewhere. *There is no room here for compromise.*

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